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LORD DUNMERSEY



BY

LEANDER RICHARDSON

JOHN DELAY, 751 BROADWAY, NEW YORK

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LORD DUNMERSEY

HIS RECOLLECTIONS AND MORAL REFLECTIONS

BY HIMSELF

EDITED BY LEANDER RICHARDSON

NEW YORK
JOHN DELAY
816 BROADWAY
1889

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INTRODUCTION.

It was at one o'clock one morning, not long ago, that a brougham dashed up to my door, and a gentleman alighted upon the pavement.

I was sitting in one of the windows of my study, after a busy evening with my pen, and was enjoying the last of a big cigar before going to bed—a pursuit in which the rest of the family, barring the dog, which, in the back-yard, was holding a long-range conversation with a distant but vociferous relative, had preceded me.

The gentleman who emerged from the brougham stared up at the fronts of two or three of the neighboring houses, and then sauntered deliberately up to my front steps and pressed the electric button attached to the bell.

I went down personally to let him in.

Once under the light, I recognized my visitor as a very well-known New Yorker of that type which exists only among the men-about-town of the great American metropolis. They are a serene and unruffled set, who seem for the most part rather bored with life, and whose daily existence is made up of a plainly irksome system of drifting about among clubs, cafés, theatres, race-tracks, and other more or less brisk resorts.

They yearn continually for excitement, but apparently never find it. They go religiously to Europe every year in vain pursuit of novelty, and come back hoping something will happen here to make life worth living.

I knew one of them who, having exhausted the thrills of Wall Street and the card-room, went four successive days to a frantic revival—conducted by an enthusiastic boy evangelist of not more than forty summers—and emerged at the end of that time more deeply charged with *ennui* than before. He felt that there was nothing left, and he passed his succeeding days in dejected occupation of the club window, with a perpetual brandy-

and-soda where he could reach it, and an appalling expression of woe upon his countenance.

In view of this and various other facts, I was somewhat surprised to notice indications of awakened animation in the face of my midnight visitor, who, after sinking into a large, leather-covered chair, laid a roll of paper upon my desk.

"Some time ago," said he, "this manuscript was left in my study by one of the most singular men I ever came in contact with. For a considerable period after his departure, which was rather sudden, I was tolerably busy with various officers of the law, as you will easily imagine—of course you recall the case of Lord Dunmersey?"

To be sure I did. Even in the endless rush and rumpus of New York life, which consumes and swallows up everything that falls into the great city's maw, and leaves no trace, such a case as that of Lord Dunmersey could not soon be obliterated from the memory.

"Well," continued my late caller, "as I

said before, my time was somewhat occupied for a while after the termination of that affair, and somehow I forgot all about the existence of this manuscript. This afternoon, in going over a lot of my papers, I found it again, and not knowing exactly where to send it, I began to read the story it unveils. When I had finished, it struck me that there was something in it worth giving to the public, and your name occurred to me as that of a writer who would probably know, better than I, what steps to take with that end in view."

Having thus completed his mission, my visitor speedily took his departure, and I straightened out the rolled-up sheets, I must confess, with some feelings of reluctance. A man who makes manuscripts of his own is apt to view askance the manuscripts of others. Perhaps experience has given him a reproachful conscience.

But, after skimming through the story of Lord Dunmersey's career in New York, as written by himself—and I was at the last line before breakfast was announced—I

found myself in very much the condition of mind which impelled the New York clubman to bring the chronicle to my house. Accordingly, in the interval between then and now, I have prepared the manuscript for publication.

It is true that there was not much to be done to it. Here and there I have slightly softened the author's bitterest comments upon his own acts, but the tale is here presented, for the most part, as it was set down by Dunmersey himself.

In the common judgment of the world, this man has been believed a peerless scoundrel. But few people, as is shown by the tracings of his own pen, have ever been permitted to see his inner being. Beneath that calm, polished, and impregnable exterior which was for a brief time familiar to all New York, there existed a personality that was seldom half revealed, and never completely brought to light. Dunmersey allowed himself to drop the mask only when, with pen in hand, he sat down in the solitude of his chamber to commune with his better self.

I have never known a man of great personal courage who was at heart a villain. A thoroughgoing blackguard will sometime flinch. He may seem reckless and daring, but there will be a limit upon the verge of which he will quail.

About Lord Dunmersey there are points to condemn. But there are others which many of us might well desire to possess. I admit that I like Dunmersey's good qualities more than I dislike his bad ones.

Had he been what the world terms perfect, I would have burned these records of his life in America. I never could forgive a man for having no faults.

So, reader, I place Lord Dunmersey before you in all the lights and shades with which his self-drawn portrait has supplied me. I think you will grow fond of him. The man who is game to the core will never go friendless.

THE EDITOR.

NEW YORK, July 30, 1889.

LORD DUNMERSEY;

HIS RECOLLECTIONS AND MORAL REFLECTIONS.

CHAPTER I.

Of English ex-Gentlemen in General, and Lord Dunmersey in Particular—Of a Slight Episode aboard the City of Berlin—Of Lord Dunmersey's Object in the Game of Life.

August 1st, 188—.

MY DEAR COUSIN :

"There is no human being so deserving of immediate and unreserved extermination as an English ex-gentleman," observed a fierce young Texan this morning, in the smoking-room.

The expression created a sensation.

There were a good many Englishmen present, and it was amusing to see their countenances. One or two of them frowned

darkly, several turned red in the face, and some of them coughed audibly. All of them were angry.

As for me, I laughed, quietly, for I knew it was true.

I knew, moreover, what nobody else on board the City of Berlin knew, that I was probably the only man present to whom the term exactly and categorically applied. My reflections, at all events, are entirely candid. Almost any man can afford to think the truth.

"Take an Englishman," the fiery young Texan went on, "who has once been a gentleman, but has lost caste, and he is the worst ruffian alive. Rub off his social veneer, and all the barbaric villainy of his early ancestry comes to the surface. The meanest, lowest, most murderous scoundrel I ever met was an English ex-gentleman, with a handle to his name. He was in Texas, and he ought to have been in hell."

"The spot you mention is next door to Texas, isn't it?" I suddenly inquired, looking the fiery young man placidly in the eye.

He did not appear to appreciate the humor of my question. On the contrary, he grew flaming in the face, and was, if possible, angrier than any of the Englishmen he had been stirring up.

"Texas is the State I come from," he exclaimed, rather hotly.

"I gathered as much," I resumed, quite without ruffling; "I did not for a moment imagine you came from the place next door."

"I will have you understand, Lord Dunmersey, or James Poinsett, as you prefer to call yourself," exclaimed the man from Texas, violently, "that no true American permits his State to be sneered at."

By this time my warm-blooded young friend was on his feet, and in a decidedly fighting humor. I drawled my reply very slowly.

"Young man," said I, "you seem fond of taking unpardonable liberties with others, and resenting all kinds of retorts. You begin by attacking my country, you end by giving me a title which I do not claim, and

at the same time you conduct yourself in various ways like a blackguard. Take the advice of one who is considerably your senior in years and—pardon me—in breeding, and don't continue as you have begun."

The young Texan made a rapid stride toward me, paused, thought for an instant, and said: "You are right. I had no business to offend any of you, no matter how I may have felt toward a certain class of Englishmen who come to America. I beg your pardon."

With that he turned and walked from the room, leaving a very good impression upon the entire party present. I took the opportunity, shortly afterward, to go below. I, too, had made an excellent impression, and I chose to let the men talk me over.

In the seclusion of my state-room I paused to reflect.

Yes, I am an English ex-gentleman. An only son, I had every good prospect in life; entered the army, spent my fortune, gambled, ran the gauntlet of vices, and ended by being kicked out of the service. Perhaps I

alone am to blame for the outcome. Perhaps, cousin, I might hold you responsible for getting me into my first crooked dealings and then betraying me. Still, I am willing to stand the blame alone.

That is the story, told plainly and without any attempt at concealment. Here I am this evening, aboard the Inman liner, bound for America, James Poinsett, an English gentleman, in search of novelty and—cash. Cash, by the way, is something of a novelty. I believe my whole fortune when we set sail was inside £200. Not a very ponderous capital, that.

True, I have managed to increase it to some extent, by a little clever work at baccarat. But even now I don't suppose I have £300, all told.

I wonder how I shall get on in New York?

I can sketch, paint, write a little, dance a good deal, make love to a feminine fool like the very devil, play cards with any of them, and fight like a demon.

This is my stock in trade. Somehow or

other, those uncultivated Yankees must give me a respectable income.

I am a player in the game of life, and just now I am dealing the cards.

CHAPTER II.

Of a Repentant but Deluded Texan—Of Matters Interesting the Real Dunmersey—And of the General Utility of Lofty Titles, Particularly in American Society.

WHILE these reflections were still wandering through my alert mind, there came a knock at my state-room door. An instant later young Granger, my Texan acquaintance, entered.

"You mustn't mind what I said," he began; "it was hasty, and in devilish poor taste, I know that."

I motioned him to a seat, told him not to say another word about the matter, and ordered Jobson, my old and more or less faithful servitor, to fetch some soda and brandy. Then we talked for a while on various topics.

"Do you mean to say you are not Lord Dunmersey?" finally broke out young

Granger, who has a blunt way of getting at things.

"I don't mean to say anything about it," I replied, coolly. "I am on my way to America in the hope of regaining my health, and it is my desire to be known simply as James Poinsett."

"I understand," responded young Granger, with the eager look that always comes to a youngster when he thinks he is being entrusted with an important secret. He didn't understand, at all. But he thought he did.

Presently he went away, and I knew that in an hour everybody aboard the City of Berlin, including those pretty Croesus girls, would be talking about their fellow-passenger, Lord Dunmersey.

Is it safe?

I think it is. Cousin Dunmersey, you and I look enough alike to have been cast in the same mould. You don't love me, and I hate you in return. If you die, which I sincerely hope you may, I will succeed to your title and your property. So, as you are weak, while I am strong, it is quite likely that I am

only borrowing the name ahead of time, after all.

This is the way the prospects point: Cousin Dunmersey has gone away to Africa. He cannot possibly be heard of for at least six months. He has gone elephant-shooting. What use can he possibly have for his title while he is killing elephants? I am sure they won't respect him any more as a Lord than they would as a plain, ordinary Mister. Elephants are not discerning.

On the other hand, New York society—I believe, with a keen sense of justice, this article is usually called sassiety—does love a British lord.

Accordingly, while my cousin can have no earthly employment for his title in the jungle, I can make it a very valuable affair in New York sassiety, and so I shall respectfully but firmly appropriate it.

I have always been a believer in putting everything where it will do the most good.

Clearly, a title that is useless in the jungle and useful in New York ought to belong to the man who is in New York.

In consequence of this state of affairs, from this time out I shall not deny that I am Lord Dunmersey.

It will not be necessary for me to actually claim the title. I shall merely let people penetrate my disguise.

One isn't obliged to fool Americans. All that is necessary is to give them a chance to fool themselves.

CHAPTER III.

Of the Effect of the Texan's "Discovery"—Of the Fair and Energetic Phosa's Flirtation—Of Idle Chatter by the Deck-house—And of its Midnight Result.

AUGUST 6TH.—I was correct as to the effect of a semi-acknowledgment of my noble birth. It has acted like magic. Nearly all the people on board are Americans, and the few Englishmen among them are totally ignorant of my true personality.

This morning, when I went on deck, the first person I met was Miss Phosa Croesus, the younger of the two rich sisters from Chicago.

Their amiable father, having made a fortune in pork, or lard, or some equally characteristic American product, concluded, a year or two ago, to send his daughters abroad. His object was to enable them to acquire that polish which, I believe, is not

the distinguishing feature of Chicago packing-house society.

The girls have been polished, with a vengeance. One of them has become a kind of amateur Englishwoman, if I may invent such a term. She says cawn't and shawn't, and talks of her bawth and her Paw's raunch, in a way that is extremely exasperating.

When she gets home to Chicago, I suppose there will prevail an impression that this young woman, who would be an infernal cad if she were a man, is a perfect picture of the type of lady who occupies the upper walks of English society life.

But, as she is a very pretty girl, one can hardly avoid liking her, even if she is a prig.

This is the elder Croesus damsel. It was the younger one I met this morning. Miss Phosa is red-cheeked, bright-eyed, and rash. There is no Brummagem English about her. She has an American dialect that is really refreshing, after the imitation British drawl of her sister. There are other American points about her that are not uninviting. One of these is a tendency to flirt with a des-

peration and an absence of concealment that are enough to make one gasp.

I have spoken to Miss Phosa once or twice before this time, but only in a formal and distant way. When I emerged to the deck this morning I could see at a glance that the young woman had made up her mind to bring about an alteration in our relations.

She came up to me, smiling sweetly, and with spirited ingenuousness asked me, as the ship was rolling about so roughly, to give her my arm, in order that she might continue her before-breakfast walk. Of course, I could not deny her.

When a man's at sea, and a pretty girl, full of animal life, desires his arm, she is tolerably likely to get it.

Miss Phosa and I were the only passengers on deck. I always rise early, even after being up late. The morning air is a great brain cleanser. The Chicago girl hugged my arm with an ecstatic grip. I could feel her heart thumping vigorously through her plump ribs against my biceps, and I must say I was not altogether pulseless myself.

The sea is extremely bracing.

Finally, after a turn or two up and down the deck, we stood leaning over the rail together, staring down into the waves.

"Tell me," said Miss Phosa, with much artlessness, "why it is that princes, and earls, and dooks (that is Chicagoese for dukes, I suppose), and lords travel incog?"

Before I could explain it to her, she rattled on, breezily.

"Now, if an American should do anything of the sort, the newspapers would call it travelling under an alias—and he wouldn't like that. But you swell foreigners have more privileges than we, and an incog is ever so much pleasanter than an alias, isn't it?"

Bless me, how many truths are spoken in ignorance.

"Now," continued the bright-faced little dumpling at my side, giving my arm a hug that couldn't be mistaken, "I would have known you were a lord, even if you had not admitted it."

"But," I replied, suavely, "I have not admitted it."

"Just the same," she rejoined, "everybody on board knows it to be a fact."

"Then," I exclaimed, "if everybody knows it, why say any more about the matter? Let us talk of yourself. The topic is much pleasanter. Is Chicago a nice place?"

"No, it isn't. Chicago is horrid. It is smoky, and cold, and nasty, and oh, so shoddy, too."

"Impossible."

"Oh, yes, we are. Papa was just a plain butcher, years ago. But he grew rich, and now he runs the pork market of the world, I guess. Anyway, he has lots of millions, and his daughters have all the young men at their heels, and all the young women sneering at their origin. I wish papa would leave Chicago forever, and go to New York."

"New York is better, then?"

"You don't know what life is till you strike New York."

"Better than Paris?"

"Rather."

"London?"

"Well, I should smile. In New York you

can get everything there is in the whole world that is worth having. Then there is exclusiveness without stiffness, and there isn't any of that toadstool sort of an atmosphere that exists in most other American cities—particularly the Western ones. Besides, in New York you can do as you please, and nobody knows, or cares."

This girl amuses me very much.

"And what," I inquired, "does a young lady of your years wish to do that anybody, anywhere, should care about?"

"Lots of things—sometimes," answered Miss Phosa, demurely. "Anyway, she likes her liberty, and she can't get it anywhere so much as in New York."

"When we reach America," I observed, "you must be my guide, and tell me where to go and what to see."

"Cert.," responded Miss Phosa, promptly. "We shall be in New York a good deal for a month or so, and I will go around with you myself."

"The offer is as generous as its maker is beautiful," I said, with just that touch of

tenderness a man who begins to strike his gait can throw into a speech.

"Pshaw!" exclaimed Phosa, with a pretty blush, "I'm not beautiful."

But she looked down with a smile that told me she knew better.

"Let's go to breakfast," she resumed, naïvely, after a moment.

That afternoon I had another chat with Miss Phosa, in the doorway of her stateroom, which faces mine in the little alley below. She was making a play at me that was simply dazzling. So, too, were several others on board.

Set a title up before the average American woman, and she will go to the devil to reach it.

Everybody, male and female, aboard this ship, is showing me the extremest courtesies and attentions, now that the secret of my identity is believed to be known. I don't think I shall have much difficulty in making headway in America. I am sure of it if you, dear cousin, the real Lord Dunmersey, remain away.

Shortly after dark, I met Miss Phosa on deck, by appointment. It was our third meeting that day. We walked about for a while, and then I fetched her rugs, and bundled her up in her steamer chair, under the shadow of the deck-house. I placed my own chair close beside hers, and proceeded to smoke a cigar and talk nonsense.

Miss Phosa's sister was away somewhere, discussing priggish matters with a raw-boned, red-whiskered man from Milwaukee, who had amassed a fortune in the manufacture of a mixture of aloes, glucose, resin, and various other ingredients, which, when duly placed upon the market under the name of beer, was immensely popular.

Purchasers liked it because it made them thirsty for more; physicians recommended it for the reason that it gave consumers Bright's disease. Thus Mr. Flip, of Milwaukee, grew rich, and went abroad upon a fruitless errand in search of cultivation.

To Mr. Flip, the brewer, utterly ignorant and coarse, the mock refinement of Miss Marie (her baptismal name, I am informed

by little Phosa, was Maria, and became Marie in London) was peculiarly impressive. He himself had tried to acquire the same sort of thing, and had failed. So he fell down in unlettered adoration before one who had succeeded, and he was in a very fair way to marry the stuck-up Chicago girl.

We were in no immediate danger of disturbance from that quarter, at any rate.

As I settled down beside Miss Phosa, she "snuggled" up to my shoulder, and sighed. She was irresistible. I smoked, and talked in low, effective tones, and she did not draw her hand away when I took it in mine.

It was a rushing sort of courtship, to be sure. But then, the girl was from America, where slowness, I gather, does not extensively prevail.

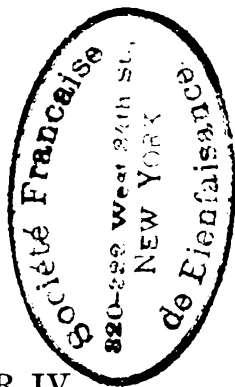
After about an hour, Miss Phosa rose and went below. She was in a mood that might be feebly described by the term tumultuous.

I paced slowly up and down the deck until my cigar was smoked out. Then I started toward my state-room. Pausing for an instant, I turned and looked across the alley

through the open door of the Croesus girls' room. The light was burning dimly inside, and on the plush-covered sofa against the steamer's side, Miss Phosa, with her cheeks scarlet, her eyes closed, and just the tip of her plump round ankle visible, lay feigning sleep.

I looked about. No other person was in sight.

I stepped boldly across, entered the room, and closed the door behind me.



CHAPTER IV.

Of Lord Dunmersey's Self-inflicted Imprisonment and its Effect — Of Sundry Things that Suggest Themselves to the Reflective Mind — And of the Highly Gratifying Development of the Histrionic Art in the Person of the Faithful Jobson.

August 8th.

I HAVE passed the greater portion of the past two days below, reflecting upon the follies and frailties of human kind.

My sequestration has been occasioned by two separate and distinct causes. In the first place, I am loth to allow little Miss Phosa to parade me about the ship in the reckless manner which she seems determined to adopt. If she has free swing she will do herself an injury, and me a very positive harm.

This young lady is going to be troublesome, by and by. Her frankness is a menace. She doesn't in the least understand the value of caution. Indeed, I very much

doubt if she cares a penny what may happen next.

When you come in contact with an absolutely and honestly independent nature, look out.

I have knocked about the world all my life, my dear cousin, and my capital of sound common-sense has accumulated in ratio to the shrinkage of my capital of sordid gold. I infer that your experience has been of a contrary nature, since you have grown rich while I grew poor, and respectable as I grew to be off color.

Therefore, O, genuine Lord Dunmersey, you may gain from my experience and my observations of life, some few points that may be of value almost sufficient to repay you for the liberties I am taking with your name.

One of the reasons, I say, why I have been keeping out of sight for the past two days, is the evident satisfaction with which Miss Phosa regards the prospect of trotting me about as her especial property.

The other reason is that there seems to be a suddenly developed mania among the pas-

sengers to pursue me with attentions which it is becoming—and, probably, profitable—to avoid.

Convince the world that you want none of its offerings, and it will press its gifts upon you four-fold.

Thus, when the passengers aboard this staunch vessel awaken to the obvious fact that their attentions embarrass me, a shrinking, diffident British lord, they will, in the natural course of human kind, extend invitations and other courtesies which, when we reach the star-spangled American shore, will prove highly advantageous.

Accordingly, with great regard for that exclusiveness which is the bone and sinew of the English aristocracy, I have remained in my own state-room nearly all the time, going on deck only after nearly all the other passengers were in bed at night, or before they were up in the morning.

The effect has been almost instantaneous. Anxious inquiries as to my health have come from all quarters. Several New York and Boston ladies have sent their maids or male

relatives to secure the latest bulletins, and pretty much all the cabin passengers of the masculine description have given me a look up.

I have comforted the ladies as best I might with assurances of my esteem and my best of health, and have received the gentlemen with suave reserve and dry champagne. By a special dispensation from above, I am permitted to smoke in my room, and that has lessened the discomforts of my self-imposed captivity.

Very little more has been said to me direct upon the subject of my family nobility. I simply put my foot down upon that branch of conversation. There is, however, a marked and increasing deference, which may be in some measure accounted for by the sagacity of that very excellent person, Jobson.

I find that my elderly and well-trained servitor has been approached by nearly everybody aboard the ship with all sorts of questions about his master. There is a pleasing absence of formality about the average American when he really wants to find any-

thing out. He would as soon place himself under obligations to a servant as to a social superior.

So it is that the elderly and sedate Jobson has been reaping a golden harvest by giving the people on this ship a series of highly imaginative tips about his employer. If I dwell upon these matters, my esteemed relative, it is merely with a view to showing you what a lion you might be if you chose to journey to the land of the absorbent and affluent Yankee.

Jobson, I gather, has a vein of humor in his make-up, that is as highly edifying as it has hitherto been wholly unsuspected. Of course, he had his instructions before we came on board. He has obeyed them to the very letter. Perhaps I might say he has improved upon them. You shall be the judge.

Senator Boompinter, a large, apple-faced man, with a long chin-beard of the color of treacle mixed with clay, visited me this afternoon, together with several companions. The senator represents a Western State, and has a special connection with a certain rail-

way, I believe. Legislation connected with this railway has led Boompointer into the paths of opulence, virtue, and slightly improved grammar. He is now a millionaire, a stickler for purity in politics, and a spectacular philanthropist. You will see his name at the head of any charitable subscription that has any chance at all to get into the newspapers, and he may always be relied upon to make a stirring and flamboyant speech in favor of any movement which is likely to attract widespread notice.

It has occurred to Senator Boompointer that he can give himself a certain lift, so to speak, by taking an English nobleman under his arm, and exhibiting him to the American populace. In pursuit of this high-minded design, the senator has been one of my most constant visitors.

As already related, he came in this afternoon, with several assorted Yankees, and we had a chat.

"Amurrica," said he, with a flourish of his fat right hand, "Amurrica, which is the greatest country in the world, sir, throws

open its doors to the universe. Rich and poor, great and small, noble and lowly, they are all equally welcome as guests or as citizens. That, sir, is one of the things that no Amurrican ever allows himself to forget."

"So I perceive," I replied, without in the least upsetting his complacency.

"But, sir," he went on, oracularly, "we have had, alas, too few of what I might call the people of gentle blood—gentle blood, sir—in our midst. The muscle and brawn of Europe have come to us, sir, in amazing numbers. We have welcomed them, sir, with open arms, as I hope we always shall, accordin' to our great and glorious constitooshun. Now what we want is gentle blood. We have millions of dray-horses, sir, now we want thoroughbreds."

"Naturally," I replied, over my glass.

"And so, my lord——"

"I beg your pardon."

The senator looked dumfounded at the freezing tone in which I had interrupted him. But he quickly recovered himself.

"Of course," he went on, hurriedly, "I

don't mean to be offensive, but your identity has been completely admitted. Why seek to conceal it longer ? ”

“ And who, pray,” I asked, icily, “ has presumed to take such a liberty with my affairs ! ”

“ Who should it be,” returned Senator Boompinter, with a grin of infinite knowledge, “ but your own personal servant, your vally de sham ? ”

“ Impossible ! ” I exclaimed, with well-bred but unmistakable evidences of annoyance.

I rang for Jobson. That worthy, with the downcast appearance of a retainer who knows he has done wrong, came in.

“ Jobson,” said I, sternly, “ how long have you been in my service ? ”

“ Near twenty years, sir,” he replied, humbly.

“ And in all that time, I have believed there was no one about me I could so implicitly trust as yourself. For that reason, when I set out upon this pleasure trip, I selected you to accompany me.”

“ Thank you, sir,” mumbled Jobson, gratefully.

"Silence!" I commanded. "What explicit orders did I give you, before we left Liverpool?"

"You ordered me, sir, to preserve silence, absolute silence, at all times."

"And you have not obeyed. Jobson, it pains me exceedingly to find that I have been so mistaken in you. Another breach of confidence such as you have already committed, and, deeply as I shall regret that course, I must dispense with your services. Not a word. You may go."

With a half-appealing look, which, I honestly think, was one of the finest pieces of acting I ever saw, Jobson dejectedly left the room, and a few minutes later my visitors also went away, no doubt to tell everybody on board how angrily Lord Dunmersey had resented the betrayal of his identity.

I believe we shall see Fire Island light before morning. In that case we should be in New York during the forenoon.

On the whole, the prospect is all that could be reasonably expected.

CHAPTER V.

Of the First Days in New York—Of Phosa's Long-delayed Departure for Home—Of a Simple Lesson in the Persuasive Game of Draw-poker—And of a Remarkable Series of Hands, Ending with a Sweet Surprise.

HOFFMAN HOUSE, New York, September 20th.

THE newspaper press of this enterprising town, particularly as regards the society portion thereof, has been doing a good deal in my behalf, since my arrival. The papers have absolutely refused to respect my wish to be known as plain James Poinsett, and have insisted upon representing me, my dear cousin, as the real Lord Dunmersey. There have been dozens of descriptions of my personal appearance and manner, and they are so like you, dear boy, that your best friends in England will shortly begin to believe you are not in Africa, at all, but are masquerading in America under an assumed name.

You will doubtless appreciate the humor of the situation.

My apartments are extremely gorgeous, the attitude of the servants is exceedingly deferential, and if it were not for the persistent manner in which jugs of iced water are brought to my room every time I ring my bell, I should be quite content. What an infernal habit it is these Americans have of gulping down quarts of this beastly liquid at all hours of the day and night. At dinner yesterday I noticed one young woman with a complexion like blue mass, and during her meal she consumed not less than eight large tumblers of this depressing beverage. I subsequently learned that she was a member of the Women's Christian Temperance Union. This is an organization which, I gather from its unpleasant utterances, is neither temperate nor Christian—the natural result of acute indigestion brought on by protracted over-indulgence in iced water.

I have been in the American metropolis something more than a month. Little Miss Phosa was as good as her word. She

dragged me about over the town whenever I consented to go, and it was only yesterday that an imperative telegram from her fond, pork-packing papa, coupled with a vigorous threat on the part of her elder brother, to the effect that if she didn't start for Chicago at once he would come on and fetch her, finally induced her to go away.

Miss Phosa's elder sister proceeded West long ago. She waited over many days, urging the plump little creature to go home, but with one excuse and another she was detained here, until she finally flew into a passion and went her way. Of course it was none of my business. If Miss Phosa wished to remain in New York, either to see the city or to be near me, it was not my duty to send her away. Still, when those telegrams came yesterday, I read between the lines that the elder Miss Croesus had been peaching. So I urged Phosa not to run into danger, for her own sake and my own, and she finally concluded to obey orders, though she choked up at parting, and the tears came into her eyes when I kissed her good-by.

Poor little thing ! I really miss her. She is as clever as she is pretty, and, if she had only been trained by a hand as skilled as mine, what a help she would be to a fellow like me in his endeavor to earn an honest living.

My dear cousin, you really don't know what you are missing !

.

October 15th.—I have been learning to play poker. Last night some members of a swell club on Fifth Avenue undertook to teach me the game, and there is no particular danger that I shall be in need of funds for the next three or four months, at least.

I have been careful not to play cards since I arrived in New York, particularly as I thought it wise to know nothing of the great American game of draw poker. And I must say the average American seems to be exceptionally anxious to impart knowledge to foreigners. For two nights I sat in the card-room watching the gentlemen at play, and asking an adroit question here and there, by way of exhibiting my ignorance.

Though I didn't participate I repeatedly told my newly made acquaintances I had been at times in my earlier days a great plunger at cards, and had so managed to involve myself that it had been a lesson to me. I was afraid, I said, to resume the practice of card-playing, lest it should again fascinate me, especially as this American game seemed peculiarly interesting. It must be extremely attractive when one finally understands how it is played, I said.

Everybody, of course, urged me to join in the game. Like all gamblers, amateur and professional, they were exceedingly anxious to extend courtesy to a stranger, as there was a chance that they might profit by his ignorance. A card-player's cordiality is one-twentieth generosity and nineteen-twentieths avarice.

Last night, I yielded to persuasion, very much to the satisfaction of the crew of rich men in the card-room. There were at our table two middle-aged merchants, one elderly retired millionaire, one stock-broker with the gambling instinct born in him, and one gilded

youth named Ganderbilk, the son of excessively wealthy parents. This youngster was of the order termed "fresh," by idiomatic Americans. He was forever talking about his conquests, his yachts, his horses, and all the rest of it, and he was constantly encouraged by the stock-broker, whom I shrewdly suspected of "bleeding" his prey in Wall Street.

I do not intend that Wall Street shall absorb the entire fortune of this aspiring young New Yorker.

The play last night was rather high. It began at reasonable figures, when I constantly lost, by stupid and ignorant handling of the cards. But presently, with that singular good luck which seems the portion of novices, I held extraordinary hands. We were playing jack-pots, with a "buck," and for two solid hours this article never passed from its place before me, excepting to go into the middle of the table and come back again.

Of course, I did not win every hand. No, no, my dear cousin. I could not so far forget the credit I owe your title as to make any

errors of that gravity. I clumsily exposed several of my crude attempts at bluffing, allowed myself to be driven out on a few strong hands, which I "showed down," and, in short, completely gained the confidence of the other players.

Still, I won steadily, and, as the betting was liberal, I rolled up a very tidy balance, while, by a singular fatality, the others almost always held hands that were just barely small enough to be beaten by mine. The gentlemen took my winning in good part, reflecting, doubtless, that I was only borrowing the money, as is likely to be true of novices at poker, who win at first, and then lose their winnings back again.

It was just at six this morning that I was dealt the ten, jack, queen, and king of diamonds. I threw the hand down in simulated disgust, and then took it up again and studied it carefully. Somebody had already raised the ante. I asked, artlessly, if it was a good play to remain in on a four-card straight, and the retired millionaire, who held a pat flush, replied that it was. Acting on his

advice I did stay in, and the millionaire promptly raised the ante a second time. Young Ganderbilk, whose face was flushed with the certain knowledge that he had four of a kind, raised the millionaire back again, and the stock-broker and I stayed in, after much apparent consideration on my part.

Three times more the millionaire raised the ante and was raised back by the youthful scion of the Ganderbilk, while the stock-broker and I simply stood by to protect our money already up. Then there came a call for cards.

Young Ganderbilk took one to his four of a kind; the stock-broker called for two, and secured a full hand; as for me, I had been palming the ace of diamonds for some little time, and when one card was dealt me, I adroitly substituted the ace; the retired millionaire, who was dealing, drew none. The merchants had long ago been driven out of the game, and the betting began. There was already a great heap of money in the centre of the table, when the stock-broker led off with a modest wager. I merely "saw" him,

and the millionaire raised; young Ganderbilk raised him back, and the stock-broker, with his full hand, returned the second raise. I merely made good, and the millionaire again raised, and was raised back by Ganderbilk on his four of a kind. The stock-broker merely came in, this time, and I innocently observed that I believed they were all bluffing. To prove my belief, I raised the bet a cool thousand dollars, and from that point outward there was some lively betting, until the stock-broker cleverly backed out.

The millionaire was in a bad place. He didn't quite believe his big flush could be beaten, but still, he merely felt like protecting himself, without any longer raising the bets. So he finally "called," and the hands were in due course laid down.

Young Ganderbilk, full of excitement and exultation, showed his four nines; the millionaire groaned and faced down his heart flush; I sighed dejectedly, and spread out my strength. Ganderbilk grinned and reached for the money. Suddenly the millionaire roared:

"Great Scott, Poinsett, *that straight of yours is a straight flush!*"

"Is it?" I asked, in sweet surprise.

Ganderbilk nearly fainted.

I hold the youth's due-bill for fourteen thousand eight hundred dollars, and he is coming to my apartments to settle with me.

All in all, Cousin Dunmersey, it was a good haul.

CHAPTER VI.

Of Lord Dunmersey's Experience as a Duelist, and the Likelihood that It will Stand Him in Good Stead—Of Phosa's Brother and His Determination to Right an Alleged Wrong—Of Exciting Events in Central Park and the Hoffman House—And of a Challenge to Mortal Combat.

October 30th.

You will doubtless be delighted, my dear cousin, to know how swimmingly the world goes on with me. I am on the top wave of success, and unless I happen to get killed a couple of days hence, a consummation which, although doubtless devoutly to be wished so far as you are concerned, is not likely to occur, my fortunes are practically consummated. The past three or four days have been rather interesting, and they mark a distinct era in my brilliant and active career in America.

I now find myself on the verge of a duel, which is one of the last things I expected to

have encountered in America. It was my impression that affairs of honor in this country were settled on a different basis from this. As it is, I am not particularly disturbed over what has occurred and is about to occur. You have seen me handle a duelling pistol, and you will know at least that I don't stand in any likelihood of bringing disgrace upon the family so far as marksmanship is concerned.

Of course, I may get myself perforated when it comes to the battle-ground. These are things which nobody can count against. If there should be such an outcome to the present affair, you will be relieved, and aside from that, no particular harm will have been done. I have never been of any extensive use to my fellow-man, and as death is a thing we must all face sooner or later, the fact that it appears upon the scene a little earlier than had been contemplated really does not amount to much, after all.

As a matter of fact, however, I do not anticipate any such event. The first time a man appears before an adversary with a pis-

tol in his hand, he is pretty sure to find himself in a state of nervousness that is apt to interfere with his aim. It doesn't matter, either, how brave he may be.

When I first stood in front of that French count, who was ridiculous enough to complain of the relations existing between his wife and myself, I do not think my bullet would have reached him if he had been as large as St. Paul's. So far as outward appearances were concerned, I was as cool as an iceberg, and I really felt no fear. Even you, I think, have few doubts of my courage under trying circumstances.

But at the second fire, the count having missed me on his first shot, and still, with singular departure from the notions prevalent in France, deeming his honor unsatisfied, I plugged him squarely on the collar button, and there was a suitable period of mourning in his family.

That, however, is of no consequence, and has nothing to do with the present affair, beyond showing that a duelling pistol is not an easy thing to handle at the first fire, and

that I stand a fair chance of escaping with a whole skin.

I had not contemplated entering upon any disturbances of this nature during my stay in the United States. If it had not been for that fascinating little idiot, Phosa, the present condition of affairs would not have come into existence. However, the milk is spilled, and that is the main thing for consideration at this moment.

As I had foreseen, young Mr. Ganderbilk came around to my apartments the other night with a check for the amount he had lost to me at poker. I had taken pains to learn his financial condition. His parents, as I have already informed you, are exceedingly wealthy people. Indeed, their fortune would be stared at in our own country, where a millionaire is not infrequently encountered. This youth, however, has been going at a pace that would appal the wildest of our young British swells. What is more, it has struck him that he has a genius for speculation, and he has been meddling with Wall Street to an extent that has fattened the

purses of the brokers, and about cleaned out young Ganderbilk's pockets. So when he came in with his check the other evening, and I saw the lines of care that were in his face, I took it upon myself to be extremely kind to him.

Of course, I did not refuse to accept his money. That he might have construed as being in the line of an insult. But I plied the youngster with brandy and soda to his heart's content, and then, finding from his admissions that he was hard pressed, I succeeded in loaning him £1,000, for which I took his I. O. U.

The sensation of appearing in the rôle of a lender and not a borrower, is both novel and agreeable. Besides, young Ganderbilk is under distinct obligations to me, and he will doubtless discover the fact one of these fine mornings.

At present, he and the club circles of this lively city are in a very considerable state of suppressed excitement over something that has happened, and something else that is about to happen, in my case. Up to now, there

have been only vague allusions to the matter so far as the newspapers are concerned, but I suppose the whole story will get into print one of these fine days. It certainly will, as soon as any of the prying writers of this energetic quarter of the world discover what has occurred. The history of the difficulty may be briefly related.

I was out driving the other afternoon with a party of gentlemen, some of them of the chosen few of New York's inner circle, when we stopped for refreshment at a hotel in the Park. While we were sitting on the broad piazza, a victoria dashed up, and from it sprang a tall, broad-shouldered young man, who was apparently much agitated. He was pale, and looked as though he had been sleepless for some nights. He approached the party of which I was a member with rapid strides, and came straight up to me, exclaiming, "I want to see you privately."

Of course, I knew something was up, but what it was, I naturally had not the power to discern at that stage of the game. Consequently, I thought it advisable to fence a

little. So I merely replied, with a slight elevation of the eyebrows, "Very well, sir, I shall be at home in an hour."

"That will not do," replied the tall young man, with just a bit of tremble in his voice, which showed that he was struggling hard to control his temper. I stared at him steadily for an instant, and then quietly asked if it was not an unusual thing in America for strangers to force themselves into private pleasure parties on questions connected with business.

The tall young man responded :

"I regret the necessity of intruding myself, but my errand is imperative. My name is Henry Croesus. I have come from Chicago expressly for an interview with you, and I propose to have it immediately."

I had known, of course, that trouble was brewing, and I had been taking counsel of myself as to what plan it was best to pursue. I must admit that I had not anticipated this visit, however, and I naturally had no knowledge at all as to the extent of the difficulty. But I quickly determined to take the matter

by the throat, metaphorically speaking, and I lost no time in doing so. Fixing Mr. Croesus with a cold stare, I said, slowly and in measured tones :

“It seems to me, sir, that the proper place to conduct an interview such as you apparently desire, is not here. You will find me in my apartment within an hour. Meanwhile, pray do not intrude yourself further upon my privacy.”

Croesus gave me a look that was full of wrath, and then drew off and made a terrible lunge at me with his fist. Fortunately for me, my early education had not been neglected in the matter of pugilism, and I not only parried the blow successfully, but dealt him a cross-counter of such vigor and force that he went backward against a table, and carried that useful article of furniture, together with a partly consumed luncheon, with him into the lap of a large, rotund old lady, who was much frightened by the occurrence. The young man gathered himself together with some expressions of profanity, which delicacy will not permit me to repeat, and

made a dash at me. He was prevented, however, from reaching me by the intercession of a number of waiters, who speedily bundled him into his victoria, from which he shouted as he was driven off :

“You shall hear from me again, you scoundrel.”

I quietly resumed my seat with the party of gentlemen in whose company I had been passing the afternoon, and adroitly led the conversation into other channels. There was a very evident desire to discover what the row had been about, but I politely kept away from the subject, about which, to tell the truth, I was somewhat in the dark myself. The disturbance, of course, put a kind of damper upon the afternoon's proceedings, and I shortly took the opportunity to drive away, having previously assured my friends that in case their services in this matter were required, I would call upon them.

On my way from the park to my hotel, it may be imagined that my reflections were somewhat perturbed. Of course, I knew in-

stinctively that Phosa had been indiscreet. But to what extent and in what direction I could not conjecture. Women differ in these matters. Some are as silent as the grave about their amours, while others treat them with the most audacious frankness. No woman possessing genuine affections should ever indulge in intrigues. She is certain to be tripped up sooner or later, because, not having her impulses under control, they ultimately run away with her. It is only your calm and calculating woman who manages to do pretty much as she pleases, and still retains the respect of the world.

As I entered my apartment, a card was brought up by the boy. It bore the name of the young man with whom I had held so animated an interview in the park. I ordered that he be shown to the room immediately. He came in with a heavy swelling on the side of his face and war in his eye. As he entered, I went and closed the door behind him. Then I turned and said to him, with the utmost deliberation.

"Young man, be careful not to repeat the error you committed this afternoon. It might result very seriously to you. I may add that I am completely at a loss to account for your extraordinary conduct."

He threw his coat down upon the table with a bang, and stood facing me. He was tremulous with rage and excitement, but he managed to hold himself in check.

"Where have you hidden her?" he queried, fiercely.

"Her? I don't understand."

"You lie," he ejaculated, hotly. "You know perfectly well that I refer to my sister."

"Marie?"

"Damn you, no! You are well aware that I speak of my sister Phosa. She is with you here in New York. You have ruined her and disgraced her family. You are a villain, and I mean to expose you to the world."

So. That was it.

"Not so fast, young man," I replied, quietly. "I have not the slightest knowl-

edge of the whereabouts of your sister. She left New York, I believe, some three or four weeks ago, and I have had no communication whatever with her since that time. I have not, and never did have, any intention or thought of harming your sister or your family, and your conduct in regard to me is simply outrageous."

"You are an infamous liar," he burst out. "When Phosa ran away from home, she left this note behind her."

Young Croesus threw a crumpled piece of paper across the table to me. I picked it up, and read it carefully through. It said:

"When this is received I shall be on my way to join the man I love. My life is wrecked, and my happiness is gone forever. It is to the author of my shame that I shall go for the protection and love which my family can no longer bestow. PHOSA."

"Well," I said, having read the communication, "I really cannot see how this affects me."

"Can't you?" rejoined the injured brother, bitterly. "Then I will tell you. Phosa con-

fessed to her sister before she went away that it was you to whom she looked to right her wrongs. She said it was you who had destroyed her purity and brought this shame upon her. It was you she started to join in New York."

"As she is not here, you are obviously in error," I broke in, quietly but firmly.

"You are hiding her from me!" the lad burst out, in a frenzy of passion. "Arch fiend that you are, give her to me or I will kill you!"

His hand went to his hip-pocket to draw a weapon, but I sprang across the room toward him in time to intercept the action. There was a short, sharp struggle, and we came to the floor with a crash. I am stronger and more scientific than he, and in a moment I had him completely in my control. Then, while he was struggling and writhing in his attempt to be free, I said to him:

"When you come to your senses you will probably regret these rash and foolish acts. See. I have you in my power, but I do not wish you harm. Go away from this house

and reflect as calmly as you can for a few hours. If at the end of that time you still believe I owe you reparation, I will give you the satisfaction that is customary among gentlemen. Send your seconds to me, and they shall have no difficulty in finding me. Now go !”

I pulled the rumpled and excited young man to his feet, placed his hat upon his head, and pushed him into the hall. He stood for a moment irresolute, and then, without saying a word, he turned upon his heel and departed. An hour later I received a call from a stalwart young man, who informed me that he had called to represent Mr. Croesus, of Chicago.

And so it comes that I may leave for Virginia to-morrow night, and a day later repair to the rendezvous with my pretty but erratic Phosa's indignant brother.

Curious girl, that. I wonder where she can be !

CHAPTER VII.

Of a Mysterious Veiled Visitor to Lord Dunmersey—Of Phosa's Desperation, and Affection, and Shame—Of the Strange Impulse that Led Lord Dunmersey into a Curious Confession—And of Phosa's Momentary Triumph.

October 31st.

I HAD just penned the above lines last night, and sat blowing clouds of smoke up into the air, when there came a knock at my door, and before I could respond a girlish figure, swathed in veils, entered and turned the key. It is perhaps unnecessary for me to admit that I had an instantaneous and instinctive knowledge of the identity of my visitor. It would have required a man of duller wits than mine to have evaded the knowledge. Even you, my dear cousin—and you must admit that you were always rather fat-witted—could hardly have failed to penetrate those thick veils with your mind's eye.

Having entered the room and locked the door, Phosa stood panting and trembling, with her head bowed and her gloved hands clasped convulsively. Finally, after a considerable period of silence, I spoke.

"May I ask," I said, "to what I owe the pleasure of this call?"

With something like a sob, the figure straightened up and threw aside her heavy coverings.

"Good heavens, my child!" I exclaimed, with assumed surprise. "What in heaven's name has induced you to be so rash?"

"You are not glad to see me," she responded in a low tone, that carried with it a touch of pathos; "and I thought you would be so happy to have me back!"

"Glad or sorry," I replied, steeling myself to speak roughly, "it doesn't much matter. You are here, and that is the main thing."

I motioned her to a seat, and she obeyed with an air of dejection that was somewhat touching. A pretty woman, downcast, will affect any man in the world—if he hasn't tired of her.

"How does this happen?" I asked, a moment later.

"I have run away," she responded, simply.

"The deuce you have. And what for, pray?"

"Because—because I could no longer endure it."

"Endure what?" I inquired, calmly.

"The loneliness. And—and the shame."

"Bless my soul, girl," I exclaimed, rising, "what under heaven are you talking about? Don't you know there will be a terrible row about this?"

"I don't care."

"Well, I do," I continued, almost catching my breath.

The girl's recklessness amazed me.

"There will be a scandal, the newspapers will be full of it, and both of us will be in a pretty mess."

"But," she went on, with a curious expression of pain in her round little face, "you don't understand."

Didn't I, though!

"I could not long remain silent," continued

Phosa, hurriedly. "There are—reasons. Besides, I already began to feel as if every eye was upon me, and every finger pointing at me in the street. I fancied I could hear people whisper as they passed me by, 'See! That is the girl who has brought dishonor upon her family!' Then, I was so lonely. I have longed day and night for the sound of your voice, the tender touch of your hand. Oh, my darling, I love you. I love you."

This was growing harrowing.

"My dear," I said, without betraying my emotions, which I admit, were somewhat stirred by this picture of abject woe, "I don't know what to say to you. It was an unlucky thing that we ever met. I seem, somehow, to bring misfortune to those I like best."

"I would willingly share good and bad fortune with you," she pleaded, as her big eyes filled up with tears.

"Phosa," said I, taking a turn up and down the room, "you don't in the least know what you are talking about. If you attach yourself to me—more than that, if you do not immediately return to your people—there

will be a dreadful exposure. That may mean much or little to me. With men these things don't very greatly matter, as a general rule. Give a man a bad name, and you increase the demand for him among the members of the other sex. But with you it is rather a different story. From the instant your name becomes linked with mine, your social downfall is complete. You will be ruined beyond redemption."

"I don't care."

Here was something I had not looked for. Obviously, she was not thinking of trying to marry me. That was a comfort, at any rate.

"Be reasonable, Phosa," I went on, impressively.

A man usually asks a woman to be reasonable when he wants her to think as he does.

"You are in grave trouble, I admit. But, rather than submit to publicity, your family would gladly make an effort to hush the matter up, and they would do everything to get you home again."

"Do you suppose," said Phosa, with some animation, "that I could ever go back again

to my poor old father, and my good brother, and—and that hateful Marie? I could die, but I could not endure that.”

“Who talks of dying?” I broke in.

There was something about her inflection when she said those three words, that caught my ear.

“I do,” said she, quite calmly. “I came here,” she went on, with shining eyes and flushed cheeks, “because I love you and do not wish to live without you. If you send me away, I will end my life.”

She was wonderfully pretty as she stood there under the blazing lamps, with a look of determination on her face. Perhaps it was her beauty. Perhaps it was her devotion. I don’t fully understand even yet what tempted me, but I did a very strange thing.

“Phosa,” said I, “you will regret this love of me when you learn that I am not at all what I seem. I am not Lord Dunmersey at all. I am not even James Poinsett, though the family name does belong to me. I am simply Henry Poinsett, a blackleg cousin to

Lord Dunmersey, visiting America in pursuit of prey. I am a card-sharper, a common swindler. I have no social position that I haven't stolen, and not a penny that I haven't won by cheating at cards."

"I don't care," replied Phosa, with dogged determination. "I love you, blindly, as women always love. I want to be near you forever, and with you as often as I may. Good or bad, I don't care. I love you for yourself alone, and I must feel that you are mine. I will not hamper you, nor harass you, or hinder you in any way. If you so desire, we will live apart in the eyes of the world. You shall see me only when you like. But I love you so much that I shall want you to like as often as you can."

Wonderful creature, this. Why didn't I meet some such girl when I was younger, before I had begun to immerse myself in the cursed waters of dissipation?

However——

"Phosa," I said, after a moment of reflection, "think the matter over well. I may be exposed at any time, and branded with

infamy. I may even be imprisoned. I may be forced on an instant's notice to fly from the country. I may be stripped of my disguise and hounded like a felon."

"I don't care. I love you !"

And she threw her arms about my neck and clung to me tenderly. I sent for a carriage, and we started out upon the somewhat hazardous errand of finding lodgings for her.

I wonder if it is fate.

CHAPTER VIII.

Of the Preparations for the Duel, with some Description of His Seconds—Of His Meeting with Mr. Abingdon Lake, and Their Lively Drive through the City—And of the Early Morning Meeting outside the City of Richmond.

RICHMOND, November 8d.

THE duel is over. We all arrived in Richmond yesterday afternoon, and we drove out of the city at three this morning in pursuit of what was craftily described by some of the party as a chicken fight. But I fancy a genuine contest of the order named would have produced considerably more gore than was shed at this morning's little affair of honor.

The other party, principal, seconds, and surgeon, preceded us to Richmond, arriving eight hours ahead of us. We reached the city at about five in the afternoon, and at eight, after dressing, took dinner at a very good club, of which one of our fellows is a member.

Young Ganderbilk is with me. The importance of this mission has very nearly made an old man of him. Some people, who have never in their lives borne care, are really very entertaining when they come face to face with anything that is anything. Ganderbilk has lived on milk and honey—otherwise champagne and pâtés de foie gras—and has slept on eiderdown, or something softer. He popped into this affair of mine with easy nonchalance, and would have taken the whole universe into the fact that he was arranging matters for a mortal combat, if I hadn't metaphorically gagged him. As it is, he has been hardly able to eat or sleep, under his load of importance, and I believe that, when at the last moment he realized the probability of really seeing a man shot to death, he would have been in a violent funk if he hadn't been so loaded up with champagne that he barely knew his name.

My other companion is a New Yorker who very considerably interests me. I met him at a reception in a Madison Avenue mansion when I first arrived. Upon that occasion he

was standing by a window, staring straight in front of him and looking so inexpressibly bored that I couldn't help a half smile of amusement. His face had the pallid hue of a man of late hours, his eye wore an expression of unutterable weariness, and his mouth was shut with the firmness of a man who does his duty, but wishes he had never been born.

In a few minutes he suddenly drew himself together, struck in a bee-line across the room, and disappeared. Later in the evening I found him in the smoking-room, with a big cigar, lounging on a leather-covered couch. He stared at me for a moment, and then proffered me a cigar in silence.

I took it, thanked him, and struck a match. He blew three or four heavy puffs, and then said, in a jaded way :

“Enjoy this sort of thing?”

“Reasonably. It is an excellent cigar, though rather green for the English taste.”

“Didn't mean the cigar—the other—the, er fandango.”

“Oh, the reception. Well, yes. It is a

very fine affair. Lovely toilets, superb decorations, and brilliant company."

"H'm. I suppose so. Seems to me to be an infernal bore. I would much prefer half a dozen good fellows, a few drinks, and all that. Let women into a social session, and it's h-ll."

I smiled, and I suppose he instinctively realized what I was thinking.

"Oh, I wouldn't be here," said he, ruefully, "but you see I am the host. Isn't it a devil of a nuisance—now, isn't it?"

A moment later he aroused himself from his gloomy state with a suggestion.

"This is too dull for me," he observed. "I guess I will make a sensation. Tell you what I'll do. I will stake the butler to go up to the top floor and throw the book-case down the elevator shaft. What this house needs is excitement."

If the man hadn't been so perfectly collected, I should have thought he had been drinking. I laughingly dissuaded him from his idea, and we had a little chat that was on his side droll, original, and interesting. Fi-

nally, my cigar being finished, I said I would go up and make my adieux.

"I wish to heaven I could do the same," he groaned, "but this nonsense will last till the lord knows when, and—By George! I have an idea. When you get to the Hoffman House, send me a telegram. Say Edward is dying and has asked for me. Then I can get away with good grace."

Absurd, was it not? But I liked something about my new acquaintance, and he got his telegram. In two hours we were driving all over New York by moonlight, and at five in the morning we drew up in front of a broker's uptown office, on Broadway. My companion alighted, spoke a few words to the driver, and then deliberately drew his self-acting revolver, and fired five shots in quick succession through the window. In another instant he sprang into the carriage and slammed the door, while the driver struck his horses furiously with the whip, and they sprang madly forward.

Two or three policemen dashed toward the spot where the sounds of the revolver and

the shattered glass were heard, and then the alarm was given.

Great heavens, what a ride that was ! Up one street and down another, whirling around corners on two wheels, and barely missing ash-barrels, lamp-posts, and other obstructions, any one of which would have broken our precious necks, we flew like the wind. The sharp raps of the policemen's batons upon the pavement as they called for assistance ; shouts, yells, and scurrying feet, told that we were hotly pursued. It was no time to ask questions, but I must admit that the situation both puzzled and excited me.

As for my companion, he leaned back in the bounding carriage, his smoking weapon in his lap, and a smile of beatific quality upon his colorless face. On the box the driver was lashing his horses vigorously, and the animals were speeding at a full run which shook us up dreadfully.

This must have gone on for a long time, until finally we seemed to have shaken off pursuit, and the horses were slowed down to a respectable trot.

"Lively, wasn't it?" asked my new-found friend.

"Rather. What was it all about?" I asked.

"Oh, nothing. I thought the town needed a little stirring up. Besides, I wanted to entertain you."

I have seen some reckless young men in my time, but I had never encountered the equal of this one. We have been together a good deal, and I don't wonder at the fear of Mr. Abingdon Lake that seems to prevail in Wall Street. He speculates as he does everything else, with a fearless ferocity that drives pretty much all before it, and what is left behind never manages to catch up.

Mr. Lake has been, as I said before, acting as my second. He was well fitted for the post. In the first place, he was as cool as could be; in the second, he knew just what to do, and did it.

We remained at the club, here in Richmond, until three in the morning, and then the conveyance came for us. Wrapped in heavy garments, for the night was sharp and

frosty, we started on our journey. It was about an hour to daybreak, and we slowly drove out of the city limits and along a smooth country road.

Poor Ganderbilk was by this time in a dreadful state of mind. To keep up his courage he had been drinking freely, and he was both unsteady and tremulous.

"I wish," said he, after a gasping sort of sigh, "I wish this dreffl affair was over."

"If you are afraid, why the h-ll don't you get out and walk back to your mamma?" asked Mr. Lake, in saturnine tones.

"I'm not afraid," responded Ganderbilk, with an attempt at pulling himself together, "I was only just thinking——"

"I didn't know you could."

"Could what?"

"Think."

That settled poor Ganderbilk. He dropped back in his corner, severely huffed, and didn't emerge again for a long time, though we could hear him moaning softly to himself as he dwelt upon the melancholy nature of our errand.

After a while I drew Mr. Lake into conversation on various topics. We talked of Europe, of America, of theatres, art, and many other things, and I found him as droll as ever. Of course, neither of us referred to the matter then in hand, which showed at least that there were two philosophers in that carriage. If I didn't care for my own life, certainly Mr. Lake did not.

At last, after a very long hour, the gray began to show in the east, and very rapidly the morning grew light. Shortly afterward the horses turned up a narrow lane, and in a few minutes we came to a halt. Before dismounting we all took a long pull at the brandy flask, and Mr. Lake asked :

“Any special directions?”

“None,” I replied, briefly, “only don't place me facing the east.”

We walked in silence into a field skirted with distant pine-woods. It was as flat as a billiard table, and as fine a spot for the purpose as could possibly have been selected. Behind us came the unfortunate Mr. Gan-

derbilk, with difficulty restraining his teeth from chattering.

The air was crisp and fragrant, and the sounds of early morning began to be heard—the twitter of birds, the crowing of a distant cock, and the chiming of a church-bell proclaiming the hour. I took a long look around. Perhaps I might be winged, a little later on, and unable to enjoy the beauties of nature.

Just then four figures came out of the woods to the left, and walked toward us. As they approached I lifted my hat courteously, and so did all the others, excepting my antagonist, who glared at me fiercely.

While the seconds were talking—all but Mr. Ganderbilk, whom I kept by me—I had time to notice that Croesus, though obviously game and determined, was as white as a sheet.

“That’s good,” I mentally observed; “he is brave, but nervous.”

He stood with his hands in his pockets and his heels close together, as rigid as a rock. The preliminaries were soon arranged, and

the pistols loaded. I gave my opponent his choice of weapons, and while he was selecting his, I took off my top-coat and laid it aside. Mr. Lake came rapidly toward me.

"You aren't going to remain like that, are you?" he asked.

"Why not?"

"Well, you couldn't improve it without painting a bull's eye just over the top of your white waistcoat," he replied.

Then, with the air of a man perfectly willing to let me be murdered if I wanted to, he handed me my pistol, and we took our positions, Croesus and I.

"Gentlemen," said Mr. Lake, when all was ready, "you will stand with your backs toward each other, until I count three. At the final word, you will turn and fire. Are you ready?"

"Yes!" from Croesus, in a loud and half savage tone.

"Yes," I said, quietly.

At the same time I heard poor Ganderbilk utter a sound that was half gurgle and half sigh.

"One."

"Two."

"Three."

We both turned, Croesus quickly and sharply, I deliberately, so that I faced him full. His pistol came up with a jerk. Mine was raised slowly and with the care of a marksman who is aiming at a clay pipe in a shooting gallery.

The weapon of my antagonist exploded with a sharp report. The ball passed so close that it cut my dress-coat at the shoulder. I did not waver an inch, but held my pistol as steady as a statue might have done, with the sight directly between my eye and his.

I could have dropped him as easily as I could have turned my hand, and he knew it. Brave as he was, his lips grew ashen. When a man sees certain death it stops his pulse for an instant, if he has the courage of a lion.

Croesus clenched his teeth, closed his fingers involuntarily, and braced himself to take the shot like a man.

Still I held the sight upon his eye.

A second went by—one—two—three.

He could endure it no longer.

“Fire!” he cried. “Why don’t you kill me?”

I deliberately turned the point of my weapon straight in the air and discharged it.

“I am not a murderer,” said I.

CHAPTER IX.

Of Some Succeeding Events—Of the General Interest Shown in Lord Dunmersey and His Duel—Of a Certain Ball at Delmonico's—Of the Petrolas and Their Guests—Of Lord Dunmersey's Meeting with Daisy Harwood—And of the Arrival of Lady Mildred Moore.

November 15th.

EVERYBODY seems to know about the duel, without really knowing anything about it. Of course, there has been a lot of prying about by reporters, for this appears to be a country where anybody's business is everybody's business. But these enterprising young men have managed to discover very little, if anything at all. The society papers have had something to say about the affair, but this information is about as reliable here as it is in our own country. One of these periodicals came out a day or two ago with the following instructive paragraph:

“There are startling rumors in the clubs

that a duel has been fought in Tennessee, the contestants being a young man from Cincinnati and a titled Englishman at present travelling in America under an assumed name. Pistols were the weapons employed, and after the young Cincinnati had fired, his life was nobly spared by his English adversary. The trouble is said to have originated a year ago in London, and there is, as usual in these matters, a woman in the case. Young Cincinnati was jilted by a beautiful English girl who favored his lordship, but she too was subsequently thrown over by her titled admirer. The two men met in one of the fashionable clubs in New York a little more than a fortnight ago, and the young man from the West forced a quarrel which resulted as already described."

What bosh these society editors do circulate!

At the same time, it is undoubtedly true that my escapade with young Croesus has very considerably extended my power in America. When I returned with my companions from Virginia I found a swarm of in-

vitations awaiting me, and my time has been pretty much occupied with all sorts of social duties.

Little Phosa has not been entirely lost sight of. She is established in pleasant apartments, and her family have managed to find her out. Her stubborn determination not to return to her people is still inflexible, however, and the end of it is that she is drawing, through her father's attorneys, an allowance which is sufficient to gratify her every whim. This, of course, is all very satisfactory to me. Phosa as a luxury is none the less agreeable because inexpensive.

What is more, for reasons already hinted at, she is not likely to be of the slightest trouble to me for several months to come. I am obviously having a run of luck, my dear cousin, and I propose to play it with all the energy that the most conscientious and experienced gambler is capable of.

I think I see my way through to the consummation of my wildest hopes, though my path is still strewn with difficulties. These things do turn up oddly enough. The past

two days have been somewhat eventful, and their happenings portend an immense amount of good—or evil. It was at a ball at Delmonico's, the night before last, that I met with a surprise of extensive dimensions, within an hour of seeing for the first time a person who will, if I am not mistaken, have a great deal to do with my future career.

The ball was one of those affairs in which New Yorkers seem particularly to glory. Rather than give entertainments of this description in their own residences, keeping the number of guests down to the limits of space thus provided, and thereby making the company exclusive, they hire Delmonico's structure, almost from top to bottom, and invite everybody. The result is generally a miscellaneous crush that is little better than a public ball with tickets at ten dollars apiece.

This particular—but not too particular—affair was given by Mr. and Mrs. Petrolia, in honor of the coming out of their only daughter. And the young lady, who is large and round, did come out, with a vengeance. That is to say, much of her came out.

The Petrolias belong to the upper crust of New York society. They have made barrels of money in refining coal-oil, conducting pipe lines, controlling the oil market by shutting up the producing wells, and then, when the price was high, flooding the country. The father was born rather well, I believe, as these things go in America, but after a wild life as a youth he found himself penniless, and took to the mountains of Pennsylvania. While there he incidentally married his landlady, in order, perhaps, to make sure of having no future trouble about board bills, and later he had the good fortune to discover valuable oil deposits on his wife's farm. From that point outward his fortunes built up rapidly, and for years he has been classed among the most successful millionaires.

His wife looks what she is—a suddenly enriched boarding-house keeper. She is fat and coarse, and she has the expression of a woman who is accustomed to retaining people's luggage for the non-payment of their bills. She wears diamonds of the size of

inkstands, and her gowns are marvels of bad taste brilliantly triumphant. Miss Petrolia, a heavy-faced girl with a desire to flirt in a stolid and bovine fashion, will come into all this money one of these fine days, and somebody, I presume, will marry her. Many men are daring—or idiotic.

Mother Petrolia has apparently intended that weighty honor for me. But, as I am apparently to have my pick of the matrimonial prizes, here in America, I think I shall select some young woman whose bank account is not encumbered parentally.

Miss Petrolia had among her guests the other night a young girl named Daisy Harwood, an ex-schoolmate, who "came out" a year ago. She is pretty, unaffected, sweet, and rich. They tell me she has millions in her own right, having inherited a vast fortune from her widowed father, an extensive cattle owner. Naturally, I sought the society of Miss Daisy, and I managed to dance with her two or three times, and pave the way as well as I could toward an early renewal of the acquaintance. I don't think I was

ever so much taken with a girl, and I made the most of my opportunity.

Isn't it an Arab writer who says a man who studies the sciences and makes no application of them is like one who digs in the ground and sows nothing? Well, I have studied for a good many years the science of fathoming and impressing womankind, and I am sowing.

Ordinarily, let a woman see that you possess a high quality of physical courage, and she is yours. Your moral character amounts to nothing in her eyes. Make some pretence at breeding, and show her that you really fear nothing on earth—not even her husband—and the game is won. •

She loathes her lord and master, but she adores you. Woman, woman!

The recipe is simple, and you, my dear cousin, are welcome to it. If you were not such a mortal coward, it might be of some use to you. However, you may have the satisfaction of knowing that a relative of yours is quite equal to the emergency, and has his hands full at the present moment in New York.

I would not have you understand, however, that these are the tactics I have observed in the pursuit of Miss Daisy. She is of a very different mould from that of your ordinary rich girl of society. If ever there was purity in a feminine face, honest artlessness in glorious feminine eyes, and true simplicity in a girl's nature, these are the attributes of Daisy Harwood.

She was dressed the other night with unaffected absence of showiness, and she has borne herself most charmingly. When I first looked into her frank eyes I felt a thrill I had not known since I was a boy, and something drew me to her side a dozen times before she went away. In all that throng of gorgeous women, nine out of ten of whom would have been dazed with joy over attentions from a British lord, she was the only one I cared to go near. What is more, I could hardly tear myself away when once I reached her side.

It is lucky for all my plans that she has money. Otherwise my trip to America in your lordly plumes would hardly prove

profitable. I feel that I should throw myself at this lovely girl if she were as poor as an almshouse turkey. As for her riches (you may believe me, and you may not), upon my soul, I don't care a button about them, now that I know their owner.

Some of these things were travelling at express-train speed through my mind as I stood talking with Miss Daisy, at one in the morning, near the centre of the large ball-room. The music had ceased for a moment, and there was a hum of conversation about the place. But I did not hear it. I was completely absorbed in the young girl at my side.

It was at this juncture that I had a surprise—one of those happenings that no person can guard against, and that go to show us what a very, very small thing this whirling world of ours is, after all.

Close behind us I heard a curiously familiar voice; a voice, moreover, that gave me a sort of inward chill, though I couldn't for the life of me recall, without looking, the name of the woman who was speaking.

"Yes, indeed," said the voice, with what seemed a slight tinge of sarcasm, "I know Lord Dunmersey quite well. We have met in England upon a number of occasions."

I did not turn. Somehow, I felt that my face might be telling stories just then. It was an Englishwoman's voice, that was clear. And I was sure I had heard it a good many times before. Who could she be?

A feminine hand that seemed to me, somehow, to look and feel like a gloved talon, touched me on the arm. I wheeled about, with a sweet smile on my face, just in time to hear the woman say, with that undercurrent of satire I had caught before :

"This is a delightful surprise, Lord Dunmersey. I haven't met you since the Prince's lawn-party at Sandringham, last June. Surely you haven't forgotten your old friend, Lady Mildred Moore, among your delightful new acquaintances."

I don't know just what I did say in return. What would you have said, my best of cousins, if at the height of your success in a great and desperate enterprise, you had been sud-

denly confronted by a she-devil of the most vicious order, who knew your real life backward, and probably would not hesitate an instant to ruin you ?

Lady Mildred Moore, indeed ! Why, confound her impudence, she is no more Lady Mildred Moore than I am. She is simply that damned adventuress, Milly Bashford, who was my mistress for ten years, and helped me to "do" the Continent, in more senses than one, until she tried to murder me one night, through jealousy of a Russian girl.

Lady Mildred Moore—whew !

"I am stopping at the Windsor," she went on, maliciously, "and shall be delighted to have you call."

"The delight will be mine," I murmured, with an effort which I trust was not perceptible.

"I am sure you won't neglect me, dear Lord Dunmersey," she added, with about as wicked a smile as any I ever saw. "Pray, come to-morrow, at three."

"I shall do myself that honor," I responded.

"I was sure you would, dear Lord Dunmersey," she went on, with suave deviltry.

I wonder what evil genius sent that cursed woman here to balk me !

CHAPTER X.

Of His Lordship's Reflections concerning Lady Mildred and Her Possible Plans—Of His Determination not to Give Up without a Struggle—Of His Early Morning Ride in Central Park, and a Lively Chase after Runaway Horses—And of the Persons Rescued by Lord Dunmersey.

November 16th.

RUMINATION concerning the probable scheme for my personal unhappiness laid out by Miss Bashford, alias Lady Mildred Moore, was not soothing. For the first time in some years I did not sleep with undisturbed serenity. In fact, I woke up a dozen times during the night, reflecting on the possible directions this devilish woman's malice might take.

When a man goes for you, there is always a way to meet him. You can punch his head, or kill him, or frankly ask that he be merciful. Some one of these methods of treatment will almost invariably bring about

the desired result. The only difficulty is to select the right means.

But a woman you cannot be sure of. If she be honest, you cannot buy nor frighten her off. Her convictions are incorruptible. If she be dishonest—and all women of the world are dishonest—you have only one sure method of escape: take to your heels. It is six of one, and a half-dozen of the other.

I have heard Americans tell of the dangerous, vicious, wantonly cruel, and stubborn qualities of the mule, and some day I am going to hunt up the derivation of that animal's name. The odds are in favor of its having come from the same source as that which supplied the word woman.

It was early obvious to me that Lady Mildred meant me harm, and I hardly knew how to meet her. So I smoked large, reeking cigars for four hours, steeped my intelligence in brandy-and-soda, and went into a sort of reflective soak. I came out of it at five in the morning, rather seedy, but determined to give that woman a fight. There is one thing: She cannot pull me down

without pulverizing herself in the ruins, and, desperate as she is at all times, I don't think that is her desire, just now.

If I can hold her off for the present, I will take the chances of carrying my plans through successfully. And when that is done, Milly Bashford can go to blazes.

With these cheering thoughts chasing each other through my mind, I took a cold shower-bath, dressed, called for a champagne cocktail—I have made it a rule not to disturb my nerves with before-breakfast libations, but I broke it this time—and went for a ride in the park. A shaking up, I thought, would do me a lot of good.

It was a fine, clear morning, and the sharp air and exercise set my blood tingling, so that when I reached the Casino I had a fair appetite for the breakfast I proceeded to order. Two or three hours of the morning went by, and I concluded to return to the hotel for a little sleep before my ordeal with Lady Mildred.

The nag was creeping slowly along under

the edge of the great reservoir, where the bridle-path follows close beside the drive, and I was turning matters over lazily in my mind, when I heard the sharp clatter of horses' hoofs, a man's cry, and a feminine shriek.

Obviously, a runaway.

I wheeled my cob through the undergrowth and into the drive. At the far end of it I could see a pair of big, bay carriage-horses, attached to a landau, and coming toward me at full speed. There was no driver on the box, and the maddened brutes were dashing along furiously. If they should collide with some passing vehicle or a tree, it would go hard with the people inside the carriage.

I turned the head of my saddle-horse in the same direction as that in which the speeding horses were running, and gathering the reins tightly in my left hand, urged the stolid animal into a sharp trot. I could hear the pair of frightened horses and the heavy family carriage they were drawing, thundering along behind me, and as I turned in the

saddle, I could see that they were coming nearer and nearer.

I put spur to my gentle steed and pressed him into an unaccustomed run. The horses behind still gained, and I again touched up the animal beneath me. He was unused to the accomplishment of so much haste, but he switched his cropped tail and plowed ahead as best he could.

I could now distinctly hear the breath of the plunging carriage-horses close at our heels, and driving both spurs to the very boot in the ribs of my unfortunate hack, to give him nearly as much speed as that of the flying team, I adroitly disengaged my right foot from the stirrup, just as the "nigh" horse flew up beside me.

Reaching out my right hand, and grasping the wild animal by the mane, I drew my own horse up alongside, and the whole lot of us began to travel with considerable velocity. My right foot I passed gently over the back of the animal next me, simultaneously shaking my left from the stirrup. Then, with a quick movement, I swung clear of the saddle

and upon the back of the flying horse I had set out to capture.

A parting kick sent my own sedate cob off to the left, and I was free to subdue the run-aways. I began by gathering up all the lines in my left hand. Claspings my muscular legs about the body of the horse on which I sat astride, I raised myself up, and began to beat the "off" horse unmercifully about the nose, and eyes, and face.

He shook his head, reared, plunged, and checked the flight of the team. I next bestowed similar treatment upon the "nigh" horse, and so nearly stunned that beast as to bring him almost to a standstill. Then I drew the lines together in both hands, pulled back with all my force, and almost before I knew it, the frightened animals, with trembling limbs, distended nostrils, and bleeding faces where I had whacked them, stood still.

Now that the trouble was over, a mounted policeman rode up.

Singular how prompt these chaps are, at such times.

I sprang to the ground and threw open

the carriage door. Inside there was a young lady and her duenna.

The young lady was Daisy Harwood. She promptly and appropriately fainted, and I climbed upon the box and drove the horses home.

If I cease to flourish as a British lord, dear cousin, certainly nobody will dispute my legitimate right to impersonate that other idol of the American belle, the family coachman.

CHAPTER XI.

Of Lord Dunmersey's Visit to Lady Mildred Moore, alias Milly Bashford—Of His Skilful Preliminary Tactics and Their Effect—Of Lady Mildred's Heated Reproaches and Urgent Demands—And of an Odd Impulse that Comes Over Dunmersey.

I GAVE Milly Bashford an even half-hour after the time of our appointment this day, in which to grow impatient. If I could get her good and angry, it would be a point gained.

A man is always at a disadvantage when he comes in contact with a woman. If he can put her in a rage, he is still at a disadvantage, but he is a good deal better off than he was before.

At three-thirty my card was sent in, and at three forty-five I followed it. Lady Mildred had been getting herself up to receive me. She was clothed in some pink material that suited her complexion very well, and at the

same time showed off her handsomely made form. Milly always did have a devilish fine figure.

Her cheeks were flushed and her eyes were shining when I went in. I never yet failed to know when that woman was annoyed, and under an exterior of calm suavity I hid this time a good deal of satisfaction, I assure you, my fond cousin.

"Dear Lady Mildred," I said, urbanely, as I approached her, "permit me to apologize for being late. I was detained—at my tailor's."

If Milly's eyes had been daggers, old chap, there would have ensued a coroner's inquest. The look she gave me had murder in it. But she managed to control herself. "Lord Dunmersey," she said, "is fortunate in the possession of so devoted a tailor. There are gentlemen of my acquaintance who have known what it was to evade their sartorial employees, instead of spending hours in their congenial company."

Oh, but the spite of that "congenial company."

"I trust I am forgiven," I continued, genially. "In a new country the tastes in dress are different from those at home, and clothes that would be *en règle* at a—well, at a Sandringham lawn party, Lady Mildred, must be replaced by different garb in New York. Only the importance of this condition could have made me keep you waiting."

Milly's steam was rising. I carelessly flicked a bit of dust from my boot with my handkerchief.

"How do you enjoy American society?" I asked, after listening a moment to her sharp breathing as she endeavored to suppress an explosion.

"It is a grade above the society of English criminals," retorted Milly, with some little heat. "I have not had the pleasure of meeting you recently, Lord Dunmersey."

Clever girl.

"It has been a source of the deepest woe to me, Lady Mildred," I drawled. "I regretted our last parting very keenly. The regret has developed into profound grief. I salute you."

"I noticed that," she responded, tartly, "by the extreme rapidity of your departure."

"Natural shyness—my retiring disposition," was my slightly sneering rejoinder. "I began to feel that I was too much beloved."

"Or too cordially hated. Which was it?"

"When either hate or love takes to employing firearms by way of demonstrating its presence, the effect is likely to annoy a sensitive man."

"And when a man has had enough of a woman," snapped she, with rage in every syllable, "he is apt to desert her—if he can."

"He is—if he isn't an idiot."

Lady Mildred snorted.

"It was the act of a coward," she blurted out.

"I am afraid the accession of a title has not improved your sense of courtesy," I benignly murmured. "Permit me to take my leave."

I rose as if about to go. Milly sprang to her feet and stood between me and the door.

"You shall not move one step until you

hear what I have to say," said she, with blazing eyes.

"Very well," I responded, calmly, resuming my seat and idly twirling my moustache. She was almost beside herself with passion.

"Years ago," she went on, rapidly, "I was fool enough to fall in love with you."

"Genesis, chapter one. Why refer to pre-historic events?"

"Because I see fit. You deceived, ruined, and then made a tool of me. I am an adventuress—you made me so. What there is of crime in my past, and what there may be in my future, you are responsible for. I have trapped, betrayed, and robbed for you. I have been your agent, your accomplice. I was true and loyal to you. You were false and dishonest to me. I have not forgotten it."

"I never impugned your memory, my dear."

"I told you to come and see me here," she resumed, without a breath, "because I mean you to repay me in some measure for the wrongs you have done me."

"Now we are getting at it. What is the figure?"

"We are here on the same errand—cash. I suppose you are on the track of an heiress. I am in pursuit of a millionaire. What I want is a partnership."

"Suppose I accept that distinguished honor?"

"Then I will help you to the goal of your ambition. Come. You owe it to me."

"This is not my only unpaid bill," I said, slowly. "Suppose I refuse?"

"Then," she exclaimed, hotly, "I will expose you. I am in my last desperate strait. I am almost at the end of my resources. In ten days I shall be without a penny. I need your help—I must have it. Refuse me, and I will destroy you."

"In doing that you will also destroy yourself," I replied, without any visible emotion.

"That is nothing to me. I tell you, I have arrived at such a pass that I do not care one farthing what becomes of me. I have tasted all the bitterness of life—I am ready for the sweets of death."

She meant it. There was no bluff about Milly, that time.

"Possibly I can spare you a few pounds," I ventured, after a pause. "Would fifty help you out?"

"It would pay my bills for six or seven days," she retorted, with indications of returning choler.

"You have been frank with me," said I, after a moment, "and I will be equally truthful with you. In various speculations, since my arrival, I have managed to get together a little money. It is not much, but I will tell you what I will do. You go into quiet quarters, live on a less expensive basis, and I will pay the bills up to an even hundred dollars a week, for a period of three months. But no partnership for me, old girl."

"Why not?"

"Well, for various reasons. One will suffice, however. I am going to turn square."

"What?"

You ought to have seen Milly's face. It

went through all the stages of astonishment, incredulity, and utter disbelief, and was finally overspread with a broad smile of amusement. Then she laughed outright. When she had finished a very hearty outburst, she said :

“The world may know the worst of the Poinsetts as a great scoundrel, but I have the advantage in one point—I know him as a peerless humorist.”

And she laughed again.

I looked at her solemnly. Finally, she was disposed to take a different view of the matter.

“It cannot be that you are in earnest,” she declared. “What has come over you?”

“That doesn’t matter,” I responded. “I am simply through with it all. If you want to, you can drive me out of New York, though it will be at the expense of your own career. But wherever I go, I have done my last dishonest act.”

Milly stared at me in amazement. I had dumfounded her.

“On account of our old friendship,” I con-

tinued, "because you were a good, square partner till you got to be too artistic with pistols, I am willing to do what is fair, and even liberal. As I said before, I will give you a hundred a week for three months. Do with it what you like, but don't drag me into your game."

"This passes my comprehension," said Milly, with a thoughtful contraction of her brows. "Go away and let me think it over."

"Better call it a bargain," I suggested, as I stood by the door. "The time to strike the iron is when it is hot."

"True," said Milly, with a curious expression of countenance. "But when you are dealing with a clever man, caution is an extremely valuable trait. You have led me some interesting races, Mr. Poinsett, and you will pardon me if I am just a trifle deliberate in assuming everything you say to be the unvarnished truth."

"Well," I replied, "perhaps that's reasonable. Take your time, and let me know."

I was on the threshold, and about to go,

when Milly caught my arm and quickly turned me around, so that the light fell upon my face.

"Don't deceive me again," she exclaimed, fiercely. "I warn you."

"That is quite superfluous," I rejoined, with dignity. "I told you I meant to turn square."

Down-stairs in the café, where I quaffed a stiff brandy-and-soda, I found this turning square idea gaining a strange hold on me.

Bosh ! Such a thing isn't possible.

CHAPTER XII.

*Of Daisy's Precious Letter of Thanks for Her Deliverance—
Of Dunmersey's Conflicting Emotions in Answering—Of
a Cautionary Visit to Phosa—Of the Thoughts and Mem-
ories Called Up by Her Tender Faith—And of Dun-
mersey's Troubled Mind.*

MORE reporters.

This time they came in droves, and I had hardly reached my hotel when a swarm of them surrounded me and began to fire off all sorts of absurd questions about the morning's runaway in the Park.

I tried to disavow all knowledge of the affair, but that confounded mounted policeman had reported the case at headquarters, and there the denials had to cease. Fortunately, the identity of the young lady had been preserved. So she was protected from annoyance. That is one satisfaction. I professed the utmost ignorance of her name and

place of residence, told the story as briefly as possible, and escaped.

On my table I found a little note in a fair, girlish hand.

It read :

Wednesday.

DEAR LORD DUNMERSEY: I scarcely know what to say, or how to thank you, I am still so nervous and frightened. It may not have been much to have saved so small a life as mine, which you did with such bravery, and at such generous risk to yourself. But I feel under a great debt of gratitude to you, and I hope you will allow me to express it in person, when I am sufficiently recovered to command less feeble terms of thanks than these poor words imply. Meanwhile, believe me your sincere and grateful friend,

DAISY HARWOOD.

I read her little letter a dozen times or more, with a sense of joy that was new and strange to me, and then I tried to answer it. Ordinarily my pen is agile enough. I never before knew it to refuse to respond when

called upon to trace a suitable letter to a lady. But for an hour I wrote notes and tore them up, until the floor was littered with the fragments. Finally, with much effort, I produced the following:

DEAR MISS HARWOOD: I beg that you will not confuse me by again referring to the matter so kindly spoken of in your note of to-day. It is ample reward to me to know that I have assisted in some slight measure in prolonging so sweet and gracious a life as that which, happily for me, was in my hands a little while to-day. It is not yourself, but those who know you already or may know you hereafter, who owe me gratitude. I am sure they will never cease to thank me, and I congratulate myself on having been the fortunate instrument of your preservation.

Yours faithfully,

DUNMERSEY.

I hesitated a long time before signing that borrowed name. I scarcely know myself to-day. It is clear beyond my memory that

I before felt a twinge at the thought of a deception, large or small. But I did feel a decided repugnance to the employment of that false title now. It is difficult for me to perpetrate a fraud upon this innocent child.

Pooh! What is the use? The cards are dealt. Let the game go on.

PHOSA!

The name flashed suddenly through my brain. I have not the faintest idea what brought it there, but by one of those unexplained processes of the mind that shoots one's thoughts to the point farthest from the object they are considering, Phosa's name sprang into my dream.

What will she do if she hears, as she will, of this little divinity up the Avenue?

There will be war, I fancy. Well, when you are impressed with the certain knowledge that there is going to be trouble, the surest road to a successful termination is to go straight at the probable aggressor. Never give an opponent time to get his breath. If you do, you merely strengthen his hand and weaken your own.

I have often noticed that where a man starts out to thrash another who has injured him, a preliminary parley is apt to result in his own demolition. Therefore, when you feel like war, do not satisfy yourself with training your guns, but fire them.

I sent for a cab, and went around to call on Phosa. She received me with suppressed effusion, if I may coin the phrase. I had not seen her for at least a week, and by the pallor of her countenance and the big, dark hollows around her eyes I saw that something had been preying upon her mind. Perhaps it was my absence.

But Phosa, who, in her way, is a game little woman, received me with a smile, and made no allusion at all to my protracted absence. She had "made her play," as the gamblers say, and she was determined to stick by it, through thick and thin. Phosa is eccentric in some things, but she is thoroughbred, even if her father is a pork-butcher.

"I suppose," said I, when her glad welcome was over, "you began to feel yourself deserted."

"Oh, no," she responded, with a gentleness that was new to her. "I was sure you would come to see me sometimes. Even if you had not, I should have felt happy in the knowledge that once in a while I must come into your thoughts."

"How could you know that," I inquired, "if I kept away from you perpetually? We can read one's thoughts only by his acts."

"Not always by his acts," replied Phosa. "In a woman's heart there is a sensitive instinct that tells her when she is quite forgotten. I shall know when to despair."

"Then," I said, after a pause, "you would despair?"

For the shadow of an instant her cheek blanched, and her eyelids quivered. But, brave little woman, she caught herself together, and forced a smile.

"Perhaps," with partly successful gayety. "After all, a woman's despair is but a trifle."

There was something in her voice, I don't know what it was, that caught my ear. This girl had grown older, and stronger, in a few weeks of the mental struggle that comes to

one facing the first heavy emergency of life. When I met Phosa, she was a mere passionate, thoughtless child. The animal that was in her had the supremacy. She met, she fell. And, by her fall she loved, and loved so well that all her early traits were subdued and lost. There was a vast, unspeakable earnestness in the heart-problem, that was new to her and overcame all the rest.

Poor little Phosa!

"My child," said I, after a thoughtful silence, "man has no trait that justifies a loving woman's confidence. If you hang over a bottomless chasm, trust your weight upon a silken thread, but never believe in the honor of man."

She came over to my side and placed her warm, moist hand upon my brow.

"Do not rob me of my faith," she whispered, with the gentle grace that was so new and so touching. "A woman's reliance may be sightless, but it is all she has. It would be doubly cruel to take it from her."

I caught her two hands in mine, and drew her around until we faced each other. Thus

we remained for what seemed several moments. Her countenance bore the sweet lines of chastened womanhood, and she wore the softened air that comes after the buoyant girl has passed the portals of pain.

I do not love Phosa. In one of those moments that rise to all men who are vain and selfish—and all the men I know are guided, more or less, by both quantities—I had permitted myself to establish tender relations with a girl who then merely amused me. But that which served only to occupy my pleasant fancy, filled her young life with desperate responsibility, and grief, and uncertainty, and all that is dark and woful. I had turned a farce into a tragedy.

Phosa loves me—loves me so well that she has renounced for me all else she holds dear, all she hopes to accomplish, all she could ever possess. I could see it this night in every sweep of her pliant figure, in every fibre of her tender face, in every curve of her dewy mouth, in every line of her drooping lashes.

Would to heaven I loved her in return!

Would to God I could draw her to my breast and hold her there forever, and protect and nurture this honest, faithful love of hers through all the time that is left! Years ago I might have smiled up into her trusting eyes with the dreamy smile of languorous dissemblment, and led her on to ruin, and bitterness, and death.

Milly used to say I was a fiend in those days.

Perhaps I was. But now I find myself saying to myself that a fond woman's love deserves requital, and my throat is choked up with a sort of hopeless, impossible loyalty to Phosa. She has given me all she has. I have nothing to bestow upon her in return.

I do not love her.

I wish I had the nerve to repay her devotion by giving her even the semblance of a lifelong regard. But, for the first time in all my clouded career, I cannot make the semblance real.

Something is slipping from me. It is no longer a simple thing to walk over the hopes and fears, the dreams and passions of those

I have the power to attract. I am no more a good actor. Something hard, and cold, and bloodless has gone out of my being, and in its place something real, and earnest, and undying has come in.

I am going to play square.

.
What damned nonsense! I shall be running around with a weed on my hat and a handkerchief to my eyes, distributing Salvation Army tracts, the first thing I know.

CHAPTER XIII.

Of a Visit from Mr. Ganderbilk, and some Surprising Revelations Concerning Wall Street—Of the Youth's Confession of His Infatuation for Lady Mildred—And of Dunmersey's Indiscreet but Well Meant Information Concerning that Light of British Aristocracy.

November 25th.

WITH a tolerable degree of equanimity, I was engaged in contemplation of my future when a servant brought in a card, bearing the name of young Mr. Ganderbilk, and the owner of that ancient patronymic presently followed it into my august presence. He was somewhat perturbed, but in the main cheerful.

“I thought, dontcherknow,” said he, struggling to keep in its place the single glass through which he could not see, “I would come around and take up that beastly I. O. U.”

"Yes?" I queried, with cheerful laziness.
"Heard from the governor?"

Mr. Ganderbilk surveyed me with an uneasy expression, dropped his glass, and toyed nervously with his watch-chain.

"Yaas," he replied, after a moment. "Oh, yaas, I heard from the guv'nor. How did you guess?"

"It was simple enough," I responded, carelessly. "You get most of your supplies from that source, and I had presumed you must have made a raise."

I handed over Mr. Ganderbilk's note of hand, and he gave me a check for the amount. Then he mused for a moment, and I saw that something was on his mind.

"Quite right," he finally observed, with the same uneasiness I had before noticed. "Yaas, quite right. I have heard from the guv'nor, and I guess I'm likely to hear from him again. I have had a pretty close shave from being obliged to live in Canada."

"So?" I questioned. "Isn't New York a satisfactory place of residence?"

Mr. Ganderbilk shuddered.

"I wouldn't live anywhere else, dontcher-know," he quaked, "not for anything on earth. But I came awful near it."

And he gulped down a brandy-and-soda like a man parched nearly to the dying point.

"A beastly bank president," he went on, rather more firmly, "who was a dooced clevah fellow, and who had my confidence, dontcherknow, came precious near bagging me. *He* went to Canada yesterday."

"Indeed? What for?"

"Speculating with the bank's money, that's all. The beasts of directors kicked about it, and he had to fly. Pretty hard lines, eh?"

"How did it affect you?" I asked.

"Why, we were in together!"

I looked at young Mr. Ganderbilk in surprise. I do not think I am easily startled. A long succession of exciting events has robbed me of the pleasing sensation of surprise. But I must confess that the thought of this youth engaged in aiding a bank president in the task of diverting the bank's

moneys into the paths of speculation rather ruffled my serenity.

"Yaas," continued Mr. Ganderbilk, before I had fairly recovered, "you see, I had points on a line of stocks, and Keenow, the banker, had the money to handle 'em, dont-cherknow? The gov'nor was in Europe, and so couldn't give me any crooked tips, and I thought the time was ripe for speculation."

"Crooked tips? You don't mean to say the old gentleman would deceive his own sons?"

"Don't I? Well, I just do. He always had a fondness for giving me money and getting it back again through the market. Yaas."

"Whew!"

"Well," added young Mr. Ganderbilk, "Keenow and I got into the market. We made a barrel and then lost two. But if those dooced directors had let us alone, we would have cleaned out the street."

"When did the directors interfere?"

"A few days ago. We had only blown in about three millions of the bank's money,

either. I tell you it was a demned shame. It wasn't courteous. Besides, it came near ruining me, for I had to make good for a couple of millions, outside the bank's loss, and I had only a beggarly six hundred thousand to do it with."

Reflecting in a dazed sort of a way upon the equanimity of this young man, I asked him how he managed it.

"Why," said he, "I just wired the guv'nor, dontcherknow, and he had to cable the combination of the family vault in the safety deposit company. It was the only way to save the Ganderbilk name from being mixed up in the big bank defalcation, as those naws-ty newspaper fellows called it. Nearly broke the old man's heart to have us rummaging around through his securities, and he cabled me some pretty mean messages. Said if I must meddle with Wall Street, I'd better go down there and start some prayer-meetings. It was all I was fit for. Yaas."

"Well," I observed, after some consideration, "it seems to me that you have had a very lucky escape."

"S'pose I have," responded Ganderbilk, with a sigh that betokened dejection from some source as yet not touched upon. "But I'm still in trouble."

"What about?"

"Girl. I'll be honest with you, old f'ler. I'm in love."

"Yes?" The idea of this little fool knowing anything about love.

"Yaas. Dooched fine girl—countrywoman of yours."

"Indeed?" I asked. "Who is she?"

"Lady Mildred Moore. Fine family. Beautiful woman. All that sort of thing, dontcherknow, but the guv'nor wants me to marry elsewhere, and after this infernal bank business I'm afraid to say my soul's my own. Too bad, isn't it?"

"Do you mean to tell me," I demanded, endeavoring to suppress a gasp, "that you mean to marry Lady Mildred Moore?"

"Don't know. I want to, but I'm afraid the guv'nor will chuck me overboard if I do. Think Lady Mildred would stand a life of poverty, and all that sort of thing?"

I couldn't help a smile at the mental picture of my brave Milly doing the cooking and tending the baby for poor, empty little Ganderbilk, and he saw my expression. He flushed to the temples.

"Funny, isn't it?"

"I beg your pardon, my dear boy," I exclaimed, for I wanted neither to wound him nor permit him, idiotic though he was, to fall into the hands of that cat, Milly.

"Perhaps you wouldn't take it as an intentional offence," I continued, "if I were to tell you one or two things."

"Cert'nly not," replied Ganderbilk, viewing me with considerable curiosity. "What's up, dontcherknow?"

"Nothing is up," I rejoined, "only that this Lady Mildred Moore is an adventuress of the worst type."

"Great Gawd!"

Mr. Ganderbilk turned ashen.

"Her name is Bashford, and she has swindled half the rich men in Europe. I have known her for twenty years. Flirt with her all you like, but don't get into compli-

cations with her. If you do, you will pay dearly."

Mr. Ganderbilk struggled to his feet and walked feebly toward the door. There he stopped and looked around in a dazed sort of fashion.

"I am beginning to suspect," said he, with a slight tremor of emotion, "that Gawd has given me the intellect of a demned fool. Good day, m'lawd."

And he went away.

I have at least done one praiseworthy act. That is a consolation, at any rate.

No, Milly shall not take any friend of mine into camp.

Since I have given up cards, I have a yearning for the excitement of gambling that I never felt before. Perhaps success is spurring me on. Perhaps it is because, for the first time since I took up games of chance, I am handling tools that are unfamiliar to me. It is an easy thing to master the ordinary cards that one uses for baccarat, and hearts, and poker. A man of tolerable in-

telligence may develop a degree of skill at these that will make him a reasonably sure winner in ordinary company. But, since I foreswore this sort of play, I have taken up a species of gaming that is vastly more interesting, possibly because I don't know much about it, but perhaps also by reason of the fact that society views it with the calm smile of approval.

I have been in Wall Street speculations for nearly a fortnight. An adroit little financier, with a bulging brow and piercing eyes, initiated me into the mysteries of that enormous and benignly regarded gambling house. If I buy a given stock, I practically bet that it will go up in price; if I sell it, I bet it will start off in the other direction. For the life of me I can't see any difference between this sort of thing and betting that the king will come out of the deal-box ahead of the ace.

But I can bet on stocks and have the cordial respect of the best people in the world, while, if I habitually bet on cards, I destroy my social standing and my commercial credit.

It sounds odd, doesn't it, cousin, to hear me speak of my commercial credit ?

Just twelve days of Wall Street have given me this extremely desirable commodity. I started in with the purchase of a thousand shares of a certain far western railway company that was not held in high esteem by the general public. This was by the advice of my little financial friend with the big head and sharp eyes. The stock went up seven points in one day. I drew out my profits and reinvested them in the same stock. Up she went. Again I doubled up, and in eight days of this kind of work I found myself the proud possessor of a really desirable fortune. At that stage of the proceedings, my financial adviser suggested to me the desirability of selling short—otherwise of gambling on the decline of this property. I took his advice. In four days the stock went all to pieces and I had a cool £30,000. I have since learned that the financier with the prominent forehead and the bright eyes cleared close upon £200,000 during the same deal.

From some points of view it is extremely comfortable to be well off. Six months ago, indeed, I was absurd enough to think there was nothing else in life. But I have outgrown that understanding. There is a good deal more. And there are perplexities about me at this time which it is a very difficult thing for me to grope my way out of.

CHAPTER XIV.

Of the Ball at the Ganderbilk Mansion—Of the Meeting with Daisy and Their Conversation in the Conservatory—Of a Long and Interesting Talk with Mr. Abingdon Lake—And of a Midnight Collision on the Avenue.

NEW YORK, November 25th.

DURING the past two weeks some remarkable events have been taking shape. In the first place, there was a ball at the Ganderbilk mansion, and Daisy was there. The hopeful son of the Ganderbilks had me in tow, and took a mildly imbecile delight in introducing me to all "his set," as he called the underdone striplings and flat-chested young girls of upper tendom. He had obviously told them his own dark story of the Virginia episode, and they held me in a kind of vacuous awe.

It was with great difficulty that I managed to escape from this more or less fascinating circle, and make my way over to where Daisy,

sweet and demure, was chatting with some friends. She looked up as I approached, and her cheek flushed perceptibly. It was the first time I had seen her since the adventure in the Park, and she showed very plainly that she was far from being displeased at this meeting. Her hand trembled just a little as it lay in mine, and her voice, murmuring the commonplace greetings of the evening, was not practised enough to conceal the truth that there was something[•] of emotion within her.

Is there any heart in the world that is steeled absolutely? Is there any human being petrified beyond the softening touch of the right woman's influence? Not long ago, if anyone had told me the creature lived who could attract me for one moment upon any other basis than one embracing the advancement of my financial interests, I should have regarded him as a madman. But here is this sweet child, with her big, innocent eyes, her dimpled cheeks, and her purring manner, gaining an influence over me which I feel hardly able to resist. I should be not less

surprised if a fairy with her wand were to turn an ironclad into putty.

After a while we managed, Daisy and I, to stroll off into the conservatory, where we were reasonably alone. We sat down under the spreading leaves of a palm, Daisy gratefully inhaling the fragrant odors of the flowers, and I toying idly with her fan.

"A veritable Garden of Eden," I said, after a while. "It is beautiful in here, and Eve is more angelic than the original."

"Did you know her?" asked Daisy, with a little smile.

"I am nearly old enough," I replied.

"I didn't mean that," said she, with some confusion, doubtless afraid she had wounded me.

"Of course you didn't," I exclaimed, gayly. "But that doesn't take away the truth of my first declaration. This is indeed a beautiful and soothing place. I could remain here a long time."

"I should bore you," replied Daisy, simply.

"Indeed you would not. I was just re-

garding you as the principal, almost the exclusive, attraction."

"You are saying that out of gallantry."

"I assure you——"

"Oh, yes. One who so chivalrously risks his life to save another not half so important as his own, is gallantry personified. I cannot forget that."

"I wish you would try, Miss Daisy," I went on, in a low tone. "The service I rendered you filled me with a greater and keener pleasure than any I have ever known. I shall carry it home with me as my brightest remembrance of America."

"You are going away?" she asked, in a startled manner.

"Before long I must," was my reply. There is more truth than poetry in that. If I overstay my time I shall be exposed, and perhaps punished. Yet it is hard to leave Daisy behind.

"You will leave many friends here to regret your departure."

"Ah," I rejoined, "we are but the creatures of a day. We come, we go, and the world

moves round just the same. Those who knew us best but yesterday have forgotten us to-day."

"That is not really and truly so," said Daisy, earnestly. "There are those here who will not forget you at all."

"Who are they?"

She looked down in confusion. I could not resist.

"If I believed I should hold a place in your memory," I said softly, yet with a thrill in my voice that I could not altogether repress, "I should feel that my life had been enriched far, very far beyond its worth."

My hand held hers unresistingly. Her cheeks were very white, her breast fluttered with swift-passing breath, and her eyes were brilliant with a new expectancy. She was silent.

"Daisy," I went on, "it sounds strained and stereotyped, but it is true that you are the first woman who has ever stirred to life the slightest tender thought in my heart. I love you."

She trembled for a moment, silently; then

rose and went toward the door. She paused, turned, stepped quickly toward me, took my two hands in hers, and pressed them tenderly.

"I am very proud and happy," she said, with agitation. "But all this is so sudden—come to me to-morrow."

And with another pressure of her soft fingers, she was gone.

I stood looking after her with a strange mixture of joy and perplexity. She was beautiful, and good, and noble, and I loved her. But would she also love me, when she came to know who and what I was? The thought left me stunned and blind, with knitted brows and clenched fingers, gazing blindly into space.

"Going to kill somebody?"

It was the voice of Mr. Abingdon Lake that brought me back to my senses. I laughingly assured him that murder was not just then in my mind.

"I didn't know," said he. "You were well made up for the part."

"I was what the cheap novelists call

‘buried in thought,’ ” I replied, as lightly as I could. “Have a cigar?”

“Don’t care if I do. Thanks.”

We were far enough away to smoke without irritating the other guests, and our host had apparently intended this division of his conservatory to be used, temporarily at least, as a smoking-room. There was a stand with glasses, bottles, and cigars, and there were chairs and couches about the place. It was a very comfortable spot. We puffed away in silence for a while.

“You seem unusually quiet to-night,” I ventured, after some time had elapsed.

“Yes? Well, I can’t very well seem otherwise, I am afraid.”

“Ill?”

“No.”

“In difficulties?”

“Not at all. But I’ll tell you what I would like. You are a man of the world, Dunmersey, and you have had a wide experience. I want to ask your advice concerning a friend of mine who is likely to get into trouble. Will you give it?”

"Certainly," said I, "with pleasure."

There was something peculiar in Mr. Lake's manner. I wondered what he was driving at. He composedly leaned back at one end of the couch, and put his foot upon a neighboring chair.

"We are likely to be quite free from interruption here," said he, blowing a cloud of smoke into the air, and regarding me with what seemed a look of curiosity. For the first time I perceived that he had me placed where the light fell directly upon my face. Perhaps it was an accident. I smoked in silence.

"This friend of mine," said Mr. Lake, "is an odd compound of good fellowship and deviltry. He is as game as a race-horse, and he doesn't care a damn whether school keeps or not. But, along with these characteristics he has had a career which indicates that he is entirely without scruple—that he is, in a word, a pronounced and well-developed black-leg."

I could see from the corner of my eye, without appearing to notice the fact, that Mr. Lake, behind the veil of cigar-smoke which

partly obscured his features, was watching me with a close and narrow scrutiny. I required no additional information as to the identity of his friend, concerning whom I was expected to give valuable advice. In Mr. Lake's own pictorial language, I was "on to his racket."

"Your friend must be an interesting study," said I, languidly. "How can I benefit him?"

"I will tell you as soon as we can get to that part of it," replied Mr. Lake. "You aren't in a hurry?"

"Not in the least. This cigar isn't a quarter smoked."

"I like this friend of mine very much," Lake went on, "for various reasons, principally I think on account of his unruffled courage. In any emergency that might arise I would stick to him to the end. And such an emergency is likely to come to him at any time."

"How so?"

"His identity has been discovered by more than one person."

"Indeed?"

"Precisely so. One of these persons he can rely upon. One of them is apt to be dangerous under certain contingencies. The third only waits a favorable opportunity to strike."

"In what direction?"

"Through the police, the newspapers—any channel that may be open to him."

"What would be the effect?" I drawled, as carelessly as long practice at the art of deception would allow.

"Exposure. Probably imprisonment. At any rate, humiliation and disgrace. You must know that this friend of mine is sailing under false colors."

"The situation does seem slightly complicated," I murmured. "Upon what is this theory of false colors based?"

"Upon suspicion, confirmed by a cablegram from Scotland Yard." Mr. Lake paused to draw a long whiff from his weed.

"What would you advise my friend to do, under the circumstances?" he finally went on.

I reflected for a moment.

"I should think," I said, "knowing the circumstances only imperfectly, that the present would be a very good time for him to employ in clearing out."

"I have thought so too," rejoined Lake, quite calmly. "But there is a difficulty."

"Indeed?"

"Yes, he is blindly in love with a young relative of mine. She, too, I regret to say, impelled by a species of gratitude to him for having saved her life, is inclined to listen to his suit. That is a troublesome complication, you see."

"They might elope."

"That is quite true," replied Lake, shifting himself so as to get a squarer look at me, and then speaking with the utmost distinctness and deliberation.

"But," he continued, "I trust that no such thing is likely to occur. I think this friend of mine loves the girl altogether too sincerely to pull her down with him into the abyss on the verge of which he is tottering now."

"You must have a good deal of confi-

dence in him, knowing his rascalities as you do."

"I have. You see, this fellow, with all his recklessness and daring, has a level head on his shoulders, and, moreover, is not half the scoundrel the world is wont to regard him. He has done some pretty tough things, both here and in Europe. But I don't know what were the causes that first led him astray, and I am not setting myself up as a judge of the morality of my fellow-man. In all likelihood he became a blackleg through a series of circumstances that were beyond his control and resistance. I don't know anything about it, and I don't want to. But I have every confidence in the good streak that is in this man, and I do not believe it would permit him to destroy the life of the girl he loves. I wish you would do me the favor, old man, to reason with him on the subject."

"Do I know him?"

"As well as he knows himself, but not so well, perhaps, as I know him. I will try to bring you together. The great point is for

him not to involve the girl. Even if they ran off together, the truth would become known, and the shock to a nature so delicate, so honest, so free from guile, would be the death of her regard for him. He would lose her respect, and then her esteem. It would bring her career to a sad termination, and his to a wretched end. It is worth his consideration, isn't it ? ”

I sat for some moments in a brown study. Mr. Lake gave up watching me and walked to the other end of the conservatory, ostensibly to examine a rare Mexican plant. After a while I too rose and went over.

“ Who besides yourself,” I asked, “ is aware of the identity of this friend of yours ? ”

“ One of the two is an Englishwoman who once attempted to fleece me at Monaco, with his aid. The other is an American who comes from Chicago, and holds a grievance against him.”

“ Do you tell me that this Englishwoman conspired with your friend to rob you ? ”

“ Precisely. That was a good many years ago, when I was at the fleecing age.”

"And you have forgiven him?"

"Why not? He didn't get away with it. Besides, the lesson was not without its value. The woman is masquerading here now. I shouldn't have recognized the man, if I had not seen the woman. She is thoroughly wicked, I believe, and is a source of menace to him. The person from Chicago is next to certain to grasp the first opportunity to bring about my friend's destruction."

"Good-night," said I. "I am going home. By the way, I may leave town for a few days. I want to see some of the sights before returning to England."

Mr. Lake held out his hand frankly, and as mine closed in upon it he pressed my palm warmly, and looking me squarely in the face, said :

"I hope this is not our last meeting. If ever you require a service at my hands, you know where I live. Under any and all circumstances, I am at your disposal. Good-night."

He meant it, too. Curious phase of human nature, that. If I had ever done Mr. Lake

a good turn, now, I could understand him. As it is, he is heaping coals of fire on my head. His liking for me must be simply one of his eccentricities.

As I started down the avenue at a brisk walk, I became conscious that I was being followed.

To make assurance doubly sure, I turned into a side street and stood close against the wall. In another instant a man came dashing around the corner and directly into my arms. Quick as a flash I grasped him by the throat, pinioned his hands, and held his face up to the light.

It was Phosa's brother.

"See here, my man," said I, "your life has already been spared upon one occasion by me. I give you fair warning that the next time you tempt me I will blow your brains out."

I shook him vigorously, threw him from me, and before he could pull himself together I was out of sight.

I must get away from here. That fellow is only waiting to gather all his clues to-

gether, and then I shall cease to enjoy life in New York.

As for Milly, I can stave her off easily enough. Thank heaven, I have the financial means for that.

I will send her a telegram.

CHAPTER XV.

Of Lord Dunmersey's Note from Lady Mildred Moore—Of His Early Morning Drive to Her Apartments—Of Lady Mildred's Astringent Maid—Of Lady Mildred Herself, and Her Charming, though Puzzling Demeanor—Of the Carefully Conducted Conversation between His Lordship and Her Ladyship—Of some Sentimental Memories and of some Doubts Concerning the Future.

NEW YORK, November 26th.

LADY MILDRED MOORE has moved. In response to my telegram, sent to her hotel, I received a message from her, early this morning, saying I would find her at a given address at ten o'clock, in her new quarters.

“Don't disappoint me, my dear old Harry,” wrote she sweetly, in closing. “You know what an effort it is to me to rise early, and every moment of my beauty-sleep that is lost adds several ounces of crossness to my bearing for the day; and I would not remember for the world that you had ever done anything to make me cross.”

I read that sentence over twice, and I was sorry for a moment that I had spent so much time, early in life, in completing Milly's education. Teach a dog to bark like the devil, but don't train him to bite. From the time he learns that, he perpetually floats the danger signal.

I had a momentary notion that I would send Milly some money and clear out, avoiding her altogether. Something suggested that such a course would carry a reasonable amount of caution with it. But then I reflected upon the astuteness of that damsel, and, upon due consideration, concluded that my hasty departure would excite her suspicion to a degree which might be painful in its termination.

It will not do, however, for me to begin feeling that I am pursued until the chase is in active progress. I should not like to have Milly at the head of the pack. Her scent is altogether too keen to reconcile one with the idea of posing as the fox when she heads the hounds.

Some of these considerations induced me

to conclude that my best course, in the present condition of affairs, would be to have a breezy little chat with Lady Mildred, and throw her off the trail.

The task was not agreeable to contemplate, but it must be undertaken. When put to it, I can act with some degree of artistic worth before almost anybody, but I did not like to take on the job of misleading Milly. She knows my method.

However, I buckled on my armor, so to speak, drank a solid quart of champagne cocktails, arrayed myself in suavity and fine linen, and ordered the brougham.

It was a bright, sunshiny morning, and the air was crisp and clear. People strode along the walks with light and springy tread, the crackle of the wheels upon the stones sounded sharply, and the steam was tossed in puffing clouds from the red nostrils of the prancing horses. Everything seemed brisk and buoyant, and but for the deep curtain of despondency and danger that hung over me, I should have felt the infection of high spirits that flashed about over all who were near.

New York, on a clear and shining morning in the late autumn, is beautiful, and exhilarating, and full of a strange vitality. I had never before been deeply impressed with the beauty of the American metropolis. Ordinarily, I could have gone away from it with a serene and unregretful mind. But, as the horses sped swiftly up the avenue, the spot took on a new and altogether strangely tender aspect.

Some odd influence seemed to draw me to the place, and the thought of going away from it filled me with a vague unrest, like the sensation one feels in leaving the home of his youth.

Should I give the driver new directions to speed on up the avenue, so that I might have one last look at the lofty mansion where Daisy dwells?

Pooh! what weakness. Is my nerve failing me? No. I am going away calmly, quietly, and without a flutter. That is all there is about it.

If I am paying the piper, I have at least the knowledge that I danced like a dervish

while the music was playing. I will pay like a man, and say nothing.

Lady Mildred's maid is a female of the astringent order. I think there is tannic acid in her veins. She ushered me into the new apartments of her mistress, gave me a side-long look that was intended to have a malign and shrivelling effect upon my inmost soul, and shrank herself out of the room.

Pretty soon she came back and stood before me with a look of severe disapprobation upon her puckered countenance.

"My lady will see you directly," she said, in a harsh voice that conveyed the absence of approval with which my presence was regarded.

"Thank you," I replied, benignly, though I was not in what you would be likely to call a chatty mood.

The woman showed no sign of going, but stood there, glaring ocular acidity at me and at everything else in the place. She had a peculiarly aggravating effect upon me, though I couldn't for the life of me say why. Sometimes certain people are irritat-

ing to one. Have you ever noticed that, dear cousin?

"What are you waiting for?" I asked, at length, when I could restrain myself no longer.

"Nothing," retorted the woman, biting off the word like a steel-trap.

"Then get out," I exclaimed, roughly.

She did not move. I reached out for a bronze statuette that stood by the window, and I should certainly have hurled it at that infernal creature if she had not briskly decamped.

I still stood there, frowning darkly, with the piece of metal in my hand, and wondering what had come over me to cause such an absurd yielding to bad temper, when a soft and familiar laugh attracted my attention. I had time to regain my self-control before I turned and saw Milly in the doorway, obviously enjoying the scene.

"You still retain your high spirits, Harry," said she, with a slight undertone of viciousness. "I was under the impression that Lord Dunmersey was not readily induced to forget himself."

She was right. This was no time to take chances of betraying my hand.

"Pardon me," I responded. "It was brutal of me. Pray, make my apologies to your maid."

Milly smiled a dear, forgiving smile—curse her!—and motioned me to a seat facing the window. I sank into it, of course, but pretty soon I was attracted by a singularly pretty painting at the other side of the room, and took occasion to cross over and examine it. When I came back, I carelessly occupied a less brilliantly illuminated position.

I always had a marked fondness for the painter's art. Besides, the general advantages of placing one's intended victim in a spot where his features may be easily observed, was one of the very earliest of my teachings to Miss Bashford, years ago. I really wondered if she believed she could carry through a scheme like that upon her old preceptor. Then, too, I had recently met with a similar experience, and was not to be caught so soon again.

Upon another occasion I would have chaffed her about it. But this was no time for badinage, and as she appeared to take no notice of my having declined the invitation to be trapped, I thought it would be safe to avoid jocular references to my hostess and her doings. As for Milly, she wore an expression of pleasant expectancy. Evidently, her guns were all in train, and she was contemplating the likelihood of some new form of attack at my hands.

"Charming rooms," said I, after examining the painting. "You are to be congratulated upon having found such delightful surroundings."

I allowed my eyes to wander lazily over the walls and furnishings.

"I am glad you are pleased with them," replied Milly, her eyes closely following mine in their tour of inspection.

Suddenly, my vision was arrested. I had discerned an aged blue plush frame on the mantel. It contained a portrait of myself, painted years ago by Milly's own hand, in the early and enthusiastic days of her regard

for me. She prized it very highly then. I was somewhat astonished to find that she still cherished this early token.

It was only for the fraction of an instant that I permitted my eyes to rest upon that ancient presentment of my brilliant youth, but I could see without looking that Milly's observant gaze had noted the circumstance. She had put that picture there, knowing of my intended visit, just to see what effect it would have upon me. But I choked her gratification in its infancy.

Later on, I would try to call up some memories. It would not be worthy of me to begin that way.

"The place is rather pretty," continued Milly, without permitting me to notice any pause in the conversation. "I was fortunate in securing it. The owner of the house was going South for the winter, with his family, and seemed pleased to find a tenant."

"Lucky man," I interjected, trying heroically to conceal all traces of malice in my voice. "You have beautified his establish-

ment with your good taste," I added, for I did not want to arouse Milly's latent temper upon this occasion.

It is pretty hard work to resist the temptation to be unpleasant to a woman one is afraid of. To lead a member of the stronger sex along gently and with undisturbed pulse is easy enough. But when you fear a woman, you also hate her with a hatred that is almost beyond control.

I may as well admit to myself that I am as much afraid of Milly as it is possible for me to be of any human being. She is as clever a woman as ever fastened her clutches in a man's throat and dragged him down to his death. I know her better than anybody on earth, and she probably reads me a good deal more clearly than any other person was ever able to read me. I cannot fool with her in safety.

Years ago, when we first came together, and she was so radiantly beautiful, I took a sinister delight in developing her talent for deviltry. She, on her side, seemed to find pleasure in winning my approval, and when

I smiled upon her improvement, she was completely filled with happiness.

It was not for a very long time that I began to understand the enormity of the error I was making. I ought never to have permitted Milly to approach my own level of skill in the game we were playing together. When it dawns upon a woman that she is pretty nearly as clever as her male partner in life, it is time for him to get behind his fortifications.

It is humiliating to know that any woman is a dangerous element. And when a woman humiliates you, she either arouses your bitterest hatred or makes you her abject and contemptible serf.

"Don't be satirical this morning," said Milly, with unusual good humor, in response to my last comment. "It is too early in the morning to be unnecessarily annoying. Don't you think so?"

"Pardon me," I replied. "I must break myself of that bad habit. In the past we have measured swords so often, and I have been obliged so many times to acknowledge

defeat, that the blade involuntarily leaps from its scabbard when we meet. But, really, I didn't mean to be offensive."

Milly smiled gently, and it was in vain that I strove to penetrate the mask. I have never encountered anything so difficult to see through as the expression of countenance one may assume who has learned the art of smiling under all circumstances.

"Quite the contrary," I went on. "My visit this morning is entirely amicable in its nature."

"I hope," rejoined Milly, still wearing that innocent smile which seemed to me to be slightly ominous, "that I may live to receive you yet many times in that gratifying frame of mind."

I laughed, slightly.

"Now it is your turn to be sarcastic," I observed, with as near an approach to good humor as I could command.

"Not in the least," she continued, with a demureness that was puzzling. "When you are in a pleasant frame of mind, Harry, you are the most charming man I ever knew. You are, really."

Danger!

"My dear girl," I responded, with a gallantry I would not have bet upon, "you do me an honor which I highly prize. But I am afraid you detect qualities in me that have not been apparent to the world at large."

"Possibly. But, you see, I have known you longer, and better, than the world at large. No, my dear old chap, do not underestimate your good qualities. You are delightful when you wish to be. At other times, of course——"

"Pray do not let us refer to the other times," I broke in, with a grin. "I prefer to be considered in my best light."

Milly joined in my laugh. She seemed in an excellent humor. It was a good time to play my doubtful card.

"I asked you to receive me so early," I drawled, in a nonchalant way, "because I intend to go South for three or four weeks, and, fearing your supplies might otherwise run out before my return, I desired to leave you in comfortable circumstances."

For just the smallest part of a second there was a sharp glitter in Milly's eyes, as she looked me straight in the face. But it quickly faded out, either by some powerful effort of will, or because suspicion had departed.

"It is very good of you," she said, with apparent sincerity, "to take such an interest in my welfare. Believe me, I am not without gratitude."

"Don't talk like that," I replied. "It isn't at all a question of gratitude. We have known each other a good many years, now, and we ought to stand together when we can. There have been misunderstandings and wrangles between us from time to time, but I hope they are now at an end."

I laid beside her, on the little centre-table, an envelope containing a crisp one-thousand-dollar bill. She glanced at it, and asked me, casually enough, where I proposed to go.

"To Washington and Old Point Comfort for a fortnight, and then, perhaps, as far as Florida. I hardly feel like spending too many weeks in New York," I answered. "I

never could remain in one place for any great length of time. My old wandering habits get the better of me, now and then."

"But," laughed Milly, "at their worst our movements are not as sudden as they used sometimes to be. We have made some quick exits, you and I."

"Yes," I mused, "so we have. But I hope the old existence is about finished. As for me, I have little to complain of, lately. By the by, how are your affairs progressing?"

"Smoothly enough, I fancy," said Milly, with incomparable coolness. "Of course, all of us are subject to the old adage that there's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip, but I am really very hopeful. When you come back, I shall very likely be already married."

"Good match?"

"Yes, as good as any reasonable creature can expect. The victim—I mean the groom—is young, very rich, and sufficiently a fool to fill a superior woman's soul with joy."

I suppose she referred to young Gander-

bilk, and in my inmost heart I had a spasm of profound happiness. I had been in time to save him from her clutches, at all events.

“Engaged?” I queried, brightly.

“Not quite,” she replied, with indifferent confidence. “But he is on the verge of the plunge. He has been avoiding me for a day or so, and I suppose he is plucking up courage.”

“Of course,” said I, “he will want the marriage solemnized at once. All young men do.”

“In that case, I am afraid my power of resistance will not be equal to the task of denying him,” said Milly, laughing maliciously.

Clearly, she had no suspicion of the part I had taken in her affairs. If she had, what a reception I should have met with at her hands!

I wish Milly no particular harm, but I also wish she had not crossed my path in America, and treated me to so many threats. I never could endure threats, particularly from a woman. More particularly yet from

this woman. She has had her share of my triumphs, and now that I am led by some unseen influence to abandon my life of pretence and fraud, she wants to drag me back and make me her accomplice. Well, I will not permit her to do anything of the sort. It is no crime to deceive one whose aim is your own ruin. I can trick Milly with a clear conscience—if I can trick her at all.

I rose and walked over to the mantel, to scrutinize the portrait she had placed there for my edification. After looking at it for a moment, I said :

“I did not dream you still preserved this old picture.”

“It is not my only memento of our early days,” she murmured. “I like, sometimes, to go back to them.”

I was silent for a moment.

“So do I,” I declared, in a low voice. “Now and then I wish I could go back there forever. If we could only begin over, what a difference it would make in our lives.”

“Ah, yes,” with a touch of sentiment in her tone, “we were happy together, then.”

"Very happy," I went on, with my eyes surveying the portrait, and my mind bent on the tender side of Milly's nature. "Had I been content with my lot, how much better for us both. It is all my fault, all mine."

Milly came over beside me, and laid her hand upon my shoulder.

"No," she exclaimed, "you must not take all the blame. I should have held you back and guided you to a better career. I was as much at fault as you for permitting our lives to drift idly down the dark river. You were at the oars, but I held the tiller."

I drew a deep sigh, and remained speechless for some time. Then I pulled myself together with a strong apparent effort.

"It is too late for us to remedy it all," I sadly said. "One quarter of life is made up of hopes that go unfulfilled. All the rest is composed of bitter regrets. Let us close the lid upon our wasted past."

I turned away and looked out into the glittering morning air. Milly stood quite still, and I could feel that she was watching me with questioning eyes.

Finally, as with a sudden impulse, I went to her, and held out my hand.

“Good-by,” said I. “When I come back, I hope to hear that you have been successful. In the great battle of life, in which we have been these many years desperately struggling, the fittest survive. As for me, I believe I have learned the lesson well. Let us both make the most of what is left to us. Again, good-by.”

“Good-by for the present. But we shall meet again, I hope.”

“You will always know where to find me,” I called out, from the stairs—with a mental reservation, however.

As I slammed the door of the brougham behind me, I glanced up at the drawing-room window. There stood Milly, with the same strange smile upon her lips that I had noticed early in our interview.

I wonder if she believed all I said.

If she did, I shall get so much of a start that she will never catch up. If she did not——

Well, it was a creditable piece of acting,

at any rate. But, just the same, I do not like Milly's sweet simplicity.

When Milly Bashford smiles, there is sometimes mischief in the air. Behind her cheeriest laughter there is apt to lurk the dark simoom.

Did I fool her ?

CHAPTER XVI.

Of Lord Dunmersey's Cleverly-managed Departure from New York—Of some Tender Reflections Concerning Daisy, and some Useless Regrets—Of some Stirring Events at Niagara—Of the Deadly Struggle and the Tragedy of Goat Island Bridge—And of the Mysterious Flash of Blinding Light and its Important Sequel.

NIAGARA FALLS, November 28th.

I GAVE New York the slip rather adroitly, I think. I started my man-servant off with all my luggage to Washington, and hung about Jersey City all the afternoon and evening, until the train from the South, bound for Boston, came in. The interval I occupied in making some few changes in my personal appearance—a pursuit in which past experiences have entitled me to be considered somewhat better than a raw hand, as Mr. Lake would observe.

That fellow is a friend, indeed. Without his warning it is not difficult to see where I should have brought up. I like him from

the bottom of my heart, and I most fervently wish I might do him as great a service, some day, as he has done me in this instance. But I suppose there is no chance of such a thing.

In all the whirl of escape and the evasion of pursuit, there has never been one moment in which a certain face has passed from before my mental vision. Daisy has been in my every thought. When I have slept she has been before me. In my waking hours she has never left my mind.

Oh, it is hard to give her up. It is bitter to tear myself away from the one ray of purity and truth that has entered into my life. Yet, Lake was right. It is my plain duty, and for once in my career, let me play the part of a man of honor. I have performed all the other characters. It is about time I tried this one.

I could not bear to look into her dear face and read there the truth that she knew me at last for what I am; to see in her innocent eyes the mute, reproachful accusation of fraud. I could readily endure the humiliation of exposure before the world at large.

For many years the world had the best of me, and its methods were not particularly worthy of praise. If I am caught in the act of getting even with the world, I don't care a button. But I could not, would not meet the look of sorrow and contempt that would come into Daisy's face, were she to know what had passed in my dark career.

Why didn't I go straight, in the first place? Well, there are many reasons that might, perhaps, soften judgment of me. I will not recall them. He who yields to temptation is a coward to whimper that it was not his fault. We can never know the value of an honorable past until it is lost to us forever. My early acts are now beyond my control. They may overwhelm and destroy me, but they must not wreck the existence of the one being I hold dear above life itself.

Here I am, at Niagara. I slipped aboard the Boston express as it rolled upon the transfer boat, and remained a passenger until we reached New Haven. From there to Springfield, then to Albany, and from that

point along to the great falls. Simple, wasn't it? I am without luggage, but I carry a French dialect that is the perplexity of the guides and the perpetual sorrow of the carriage-drivers. I don't believe any human being, however great his power of penetration, would recognize in my present exterior the well-bred, lordly Englishman who started for Florida the other afternoon.

NEW YORK, December 8th.

I THINK the race is about run. I doubt if any person will regard me as inclined to give up the effort of resistance until I am finally pinioned to the wall, but I must confess that I cannot quite see my way out of the desperately dark corner into which I am now driven. Well, there is one point about me, my dear cousin, which you will not have to be ashamed of: I will never plead for mercy. Let me see: It was about ten days ago that I finished the last instalment of this faithful, if somewhat prolonged, letter to you. Having turned off the final line, I strolled out for a walk, and my path lay over the bridge that joins the shore to Goat Island.

About half-way across, I paused, leaned upon the rail for a half-hour or longer, reflecting upon various things—but principally upon *her*—and then passed on.

It was just coming dusk, and the night was gloomy and forbidding. I sat for a while on one of the island benches, and then started slowly back. About where I stopped before I again checked my steps, and stood passive. The air was tremulous with the roar of the falls which rumbled ceaselessly, and, I fancied, with an ominous sound. Above, the clouds hung thick and black, and beneath, the mad rush of the mighty river seethed and whirled away to the brink. Everything was moist, heavy, and oppressive. It seemed almost as though the atmosphere was closing in about me in thick, impenetrable walls. Suddenly, out of the rumble of the flood, and close by my side, there sounded a human voice.

“I want you, Henry Poinsett.”

At the same moment a heavy hand fell upon my shoulder, and I felt the cold muzzle of a pistol against my face.

"By what authority?" I asked, as calmly as the circumstances of the case would permit.

"I have a warrant for your arrest. You are charged with swindling."

There was something familiar in the voice, though I could not place it at the time.

"Very well," I said, "I will go with you."

For just the shadow of an instant the pistol was turned aside.

It was a fatal relaxation. Before the man who had hold of the weapon could have time to think, I caught his wrist and seized the back of his hand between my teeth. With a cry he dropped his pistol, and a terrible struggle ensued. It was a fight for life. It meant freedom for me, existence for the other.

We rolled about, we strained every nerve, we fought like tigers. There was no sound save our heavy breathing as we wrestled, and struck out, and struggled. We had no breath to waste in shouting. For one of us this was the last battle.

Where two men are about equally matched as to strength, there is only one outcome to a struggle like this. The one whose experience is greatest must ultimately win.

Years ago at school I was the crack fighter and wrestler. I was never beaten.

Gradually, on that lonely bridge, above the tumultuous stream, I felt myself gaining upon my opponent. His grip grew less tenacious, his struggles less fierce. Finally, I locked his throat under my elbow, seized my wrist with the other hand, and held on with a grip like a surely, relentlessly closing collar of steel.

He made one last, desperate effort to loosen my hold, his chest heaved for a moment, and he became inert. When he was quite moveless, I sprang to my feet, grasped the strangled form, raised it with a mighty effort above my head, and cast it violently from me, into the engulfing cataract.

At the same instant I was half blinded by a flash of light so white and so intense that it left me sightless until I had almost time to regain my breath.

I did not pause to reflect upon it until I had gathered up the pistol and the hat of my assailant, and thrown them after his carcass into the speeding tide. Then, as I adjusted my own disturbed raiment, made an effort at regaining my habitual composure, and walked slowly up the road toward the station, that flash of dazzling light took a curious hold upon my fancy.

What could it have been ?

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All this happened ten days ago. This morning I discovered the explanation. Naturally, in the midst of my cautious seclusion, here in the great city—a man hides safest in the heart of the throng—I have been watching the newspapers with considerable care. Until to-day there has been nothing printed that would give the slightest clue to the mystery of the bridge.

But in this morning's paper I read an article about the experiments recently made in the art of photographing by flash-light, and in the "Personal" column of the same paper I found these lines :

H. P.—I have a remarkably accurate portrait of yourself, executed at a famous resort. It is for sale—if not to you, to the highest bidder.—M. B.

That fiend incarnate, Milly Bashford, has cornered me.

CHAPTER XVII.

Of Lord Dunmersey's Clear Reading of the Signs, and Summing up of the Situation—Of His Determination to Meet the Complication Boldly, and of a Surprising Interview in Central Park—Of a Remarkable Flashlight Photograph, and the High Price Set upon It by the Artist—Of Milly Bashford's very Material Vengeance, and of Her Victim's Doubts.

December 10th.

LADY MILDRED wants money, that is clear, and she has adopted this means of getting it. She intends to bleed me to the tune of a very handsome sum, or to give the photograph of which she speaks in her advertisement over to the police. Could it have been Milly herself who used the flashlight so effectively, up at Niagara? And if so, how on earth did she happen to be there? She must have had some compact with the man who undertook to arrest me. Who could *he* have been? A detective? If so, he must have been acting on information furnished him by Milly.

I should not like to stand trial for the killing of that fellow, whoever he was, particularly if it could be shown that he was an officer of the law. True, I might escape the penalty, but during my trial you might come back from Africa, my dear cousin, and as attention would probably be pretty closely centred in me at that time, there would arise some unpleasant consequences, even if the murder proceedings were to fail.

I could take time by the forelock, and clear out to Brazil, or Spain, or somewhere, to be sure. Still, with that cursed photograph in existence, life would be a burden. On the whole, I suppose my best plan is to see Milly, and "square" her. If I can get hold of that picture, supposing she really has such a thing, all evidences of very serious lawbreaking on my part will be destroyed. The great cataract must have obliterated any other traces of it that might have had an existence. Certainly, no person will recognize the body of my assailant by the time the river has finished with him.

Yes, I will see Milly. To tell the plain

truth, I wish I had met her that night at Niagara. Then we could have struck a balance without prolonging the negotiations. However, it is a trifle late to figure on what might have happened. It is easy to foresee backward, as we say in Ireland.

These thoughts ran through my mind all day yesterday, after I saw that newspaper advertisement, and I finally wrote a note to the fair Lady Mildred Moore, saying she could meet me at ten this morning, on the Mall, in the park. I selected the spot because of its openness, and the difficulty anyone might have in approaching without being seen. I didn't propose to allow Milly to ring in any witnesses to our little conversation, whatever it might turn out to be. And, as, at this time of year the park is not exactly what you would call thronged with pedestrians, I concluded that we ought to have a fairly uninterrupted interview.

I was right. I have just come back from the park, and I feel a good deal of a load taken from my mind—not to mention the weight that has been lifted from my pocket.

I was on hand promptly at the appointed hour, this time. I had no desire to stir up Milly's temper just now, as I had done at some of our meetings. Upon the present occasion she has too much the best of the bargain. So I turned the collar of my ulster up around me, pulled my hat down over my eyes, and repaired to the place agreed upon. Milly, also, was commendably prompt. I had not been waiting more than four or five minutes when a carriage came in sight, and stopped a hundred yards or so from where I sat. Out of this carriage stepped my lady, and after sending the vehicle away, she walked briskly toward me. She carried a small satchel, and her face was beaming as she approached. She was full of the good nature that comes to one who has the big end of a bargain, and knows it.

"You seem in excellent spirits this morning," said I, without visible perturbation, as she came up.

"Thank you," she replied, cheerfully. "So do you. Though I dare say appearances are deceiving in this instance."

"On the contrary," I rejoined, "I am feeling unusually well, Lady Mildred. The condition is doubtless due to the pleasure of this early morning appointment with you. I have looked forward for weeks to this delightful occasion."

"If you please," said Milly, with a rather steely look in her eyes, "we will not indulge in these coquetries. We are here, I believe, for business."

"As you say," I responded, carelessly. "I believe you advertised a portrait of me for sale."

"Precisely. It was taken at Niagara."

"At Niagara? Then the camera must be of the long-range variety. I have never been in Niagara."

"How very singular. Yet, when you see this portrait you will, I am sure, acknowledge that it looks very much like you. And, moreover, you will doubtless call to mind the identity of the other figure in the picture."

"Oh! Then there is another figure?"

Now we are getting at it. I wonder who he was.

"Decidedly. Would you like to see the portrait?"

"Er—yes," I said, with a conspicuous yawn. "I always did have a penchant for works of art."

Milly stared at me for an instant. My affectation of indifference threw her off her guard for that brief space. Then she said, as she opened the little satchel that lay in her lap:

"Henry, you ought to have been an actor."

"I would try it," I replied, amiably, "if I could be sure of the compensation of applause from you. I should feel that I had received a tribute from the most peerless of all artists in dissembling."

"Yes. It was doubtless to win such a tribute that you performed such a brilliant piece of histrionic work when you last did me the honor to call upon me."

Milly laughed in a rather chill manner, and held out to me a little roll of paper, such as one gets from the photographer with a portrait proof upon it. I took the little

roll, nerved myself against betraying the slightest sign of surprise, and straightened the paper out.

Undoubtedly, my photograph.

There I stood, with a look of fierce rage on my face, my figure firm and erect, and the body of a man held high above my head. In front ran the rail of the bridge, beneath whirled the mighty torrent, and on the roadway at my feet lay two hats and a pistol.

I took a second look at the face of the man I held in the air about to launch into eternity. The eyes were closed, the features swollen and discolored, but there was no possible mistaking his identity.

It was Phosa's brother.

"H'm," I mused, aloud, "I told that young man, the last time we met, that if he ever meddled with me again, I would kill him. I cannot say I am sorry."

"Good picture, isn't it?" asked Milly, with a malicious grin.

"Extremely life-like," I replied, indifferently.

"Or death-like," corrected Milly.

"If you don't mind," said I, after a moment, "there are one or two things I would like to know. In the first place, how did you come to league yourself with this young man? In the second, what prompted you to put up this elaborate photographic scheme?"

"Well," said Milly, with the air of one who has done an adroit thing and is naturally proud of it, "I happened to be driving up the avenue one night when I saw a person I thought I knew, seize another person by the throat, shake him vigorously, and throw him down upon the pavement. As soon as the person who had committed this assault went away, I drove over to where his victim was slowly gathering himself up, and asked him one or two questions. The next day he came to my apartments, and we had a real cozy talk about you, Mr. Poinsett."

"Well?"

"At about that time I received from you a \$1,000 note accompanied by a visit from the donor, whose remarkable skill in the art of deception would have misled one who

had not enjoyed a life-long acquaintance with him. It occurred to me, under these circumstances, that you might possibly be contemplating a hasty departure from America, and that perhaps the money with which you so liberally supplied me was bestowed with the laudable design of throwing me off the track. I was especially struck with this belief in view of the easy and conscientious way in which you had just betrayed me to that little idiot, Ganderbilk. It was cruel of you. In consequence of these reflections, I concluded to hunt you up. With the young man's help I succeeded tolerably well."

"Yes, you got him killed."

"That was precisely what I expected," said she.

"And you went deliberately to work to compass this man's death?"

"Not so much that," replied Milly, with the utmost coolness, as though a few human lives, one way or the other, didn't amount to much of anything. "But he was determined to take you, single-handed, cost what it might, in order to make the humiliation of your ar-

rest all the greater. I mildly suggested the unwisdom of such a course, but you men are all self-willed, and he would not be told."

"Perhaps you didn't urge him to the utmost possible extent," I suggested.

"Perhaps not. At any rate, I knew very well that when he went to undertake your arrest there would be a turbulent time, and I meant to be there when it occurred. I owed you this little courtesy, because you had done so much to ruin my prospects in America. I should have captured a millionaire's son, but for you. That was why I wanted to show you all the attention I could at Niagara."

"Very kind. Very kind indeed."

"When this young man started out over the bridge that dark evening, I didn't require to be told that one of you would never come back alive. It is quite possible that I guessed who the victor would be. Recollect, I have known you many years, Henry."

"I am not likely to forget it."

"Well," she went on, apparently not noticing the bitterness of my last remark, "if you remember rightly, it will recur to you that

when I first had the extreme and gratifying honor of making your acquaintance, at home, I was employed as an assistant in a photographer's studio. For some time past I have been dabbling for pleasure in my old pursuit, and I found that the photographic art in America had undergone many improvements—among them the useful possibility of taking pictures in the dark. I intend to carry back to England with me a large number of reproductions of American people and places. That was how I happened to be supplied with my flash-light camera at Niagara. Is the narrative clear?"

"I think I comprehend it. You knew that if this young fellow and I were to meet, out on the bridge, there would be a combat to the death. You believed I would be the victor. You proposed to so completely take me in the act that I could not possibly escape, if you chose to supply the evidence in your possession. But you did not intend to use that evidence if I would buy it."

"You seize the situation with a master grasp," said Milly, icily. "I could not

have presented the case more clearly, myself."

"As there is no more to be said concerning your motives," I went on, quietly, "suppose we come to terms. What is your price?"

"Well," replied Milly, looking me squarely in the eye, "I had thought ten thousand pounds would be about right."

I stared at her for some time, speechless.

"Upon my word," I said, finally, "you are the first Englishwoman I ever knew who could perpetrate a joke. Where do you expect me to get ten thousand pounds?"

"In your breast pocket. Come, Henry, this is no time for any of your acting. I have the means of knowing you have made, within the past month, at least twice the amount I mention. I don't know how much more than that you have cleared, but I do know that you possess twenty United States Treasury notes of \$5,000 each—exactly twenty thousand pounds. I want just half of it."

"Aren't your terms a little high?"

"No higher than yours have been with me," she replied, defiantly.

"Suppose," I said, with a decidedly wicked sensation in my mind, "suppose I refuse you."

"Then," replied Milly, "I shall give the portrait to the police. I rather yearn to figure as a public benefactor."

"I already have the picture," I rejoined. "What is to prevent me from destroying it, and refusing to give you one penny?"

"Nothing in the least," responded Milly, with complete calmness. "But you have overlooked one important point. The negative is still in existence."

"I might take that from you also," said I, half inclined to attack her. "It is in your satchel, I suppose."

Milly laughed.

"You must have forgotten with whom you are dealing, Henry," she exclaimed. "No, my dear fellow, I am not yet idiotic. The plate is down there in my carriage. Come, give me the ten outside notes on that roll of bills, and I will surrender the negative."

"Better make me a more liberal discount," I said, trying to recover my self-control.

"Not a penny less."

I slowly counted out the money.

"That is more reasonable," said she, her eyes glistening as she took the notes. "Now walk down to the carriage with me, and I will hand over the plate."

We walked as Milly suggested, I rather morose and glum, she voluble, witty, and light-hearted. She ought to have been, indeed !

At the carriage door she handed me a small parcel. I unwrapped it and looked up at the sky through the plate of glass. It was the negative. I smashed it into a million fragments. Then a thought struck me.

"See here, Milly," I said, "don't fail to play square in this matter."

"What do you mean ?"

"You haven't held out an extra print, have you ?"

"I gave you the only one that was ever made."

"On your word ?"

"On my word. Good-by, Harry. I trust we may meet again."

"I was just hoping," retorted I, amiably, "that the men and women would be separated in hell."

"By the way," said Milly, "lest you should remain in error, permit me to say that when you called on me the other day in New York, I already knew you had betrayed me to my prospective husband. Otherwise your masterly handling of the situation might have misled me, and saved you ten thousand pounds. Good-by."

She laughed, and the carriage rolled away.

There isn't much danger that we shall run across each other for some time to come. I am going to jump the country. With what I have left I can start in respectably in some new part of the world. Hang her! She has bled me roundly, I must say. Fifty thousand dollars is a big price for one small photograph. The amazing thing is that she didn't make me have the money changed into Bank of England notes for her, while she was about it.

I wonder if she told me the truth when she said this was the only copy in existence? I took it out of my pocket and looked at the portrait again. It was a remarkable likeness.

With a match I set fire to the photograph, and from the flame thus secured I lighted one of the best cigars I ever smoked. As I walked down through the park I couldn't help doubting again if Milly, thinking of striking my bank account at some future time, had been forehanded enough to print a few extra copies.

Milly has not a forgiving nature. Still, this ought to square the Ganderbilk episode.

Will it?

The thought is not comfortable.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Of Lady Mildred's Last Act in the Drama of Lord Dunmersey's Career—Of Lord Dunmersey's Final Resolve, and His Visit to Mr. Abingdon Lake—Of Mr. Lake's Generous Proposition, and Dunmersey's Firm Refusal—Of His Parting Letters to Phosa and Daisy, and His Last Cigar—And of an Unopened Cablegram that might have Saved a Human Life.

MR. LAKE'S STUDY, FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK,
December 13th.

THIS, my dear cousin, will be the last letter of the series of cheering communications with which I have been favoring you during the past few months. In my mind's eye, my venerated and beloved relative, I can picture you suffused with gloom at the receipt of this melancholy intelligence. You always regarded me with an opulent, overmastering affection, and the close of my correspondence will naturally create a void in your life which can never be filled. I appreciate your prospective grief, and the thought of it

alone has done much to make me hesitate regarding the course which I have finally decided to pursue.

Well, here I am, in the study of Mr. Abingdon Lake. True to his word, he has done me one great favor in promising, when I am out of this, to attend to some important matters which I cannot conveniently arrange in person. Lake is true blue—which, by the way, is the proper color for lakes.

The other day, when Milly and I parted in Central Park, I felt somewhat uneasy as to the distant future, but, upon my word, I had no idea that she-devil proposed my immediate destruction. This is precisely what she had in mind, however. The lady's mode of operation was extremely methodical. As nearly as I can arrive at the truth of the matter, she first engaged passage for Europe, and then sent for the chief of police. To this official the precious Milly gave a copy of the Niagara portrait and a carefully prepared history of the career of the bogus Lord Dunmersey. Then she went aboard the ship and cleared out.

These facts I discovered in the newspapers, yesterday afternoon. Having captured a very handsome portion of my money, Milly doubtless thought it an advisable thing to get me out of the way, for the sake of convenience in the future. I always said she was a far-sighted young woman.

When I got hold of an evening paper yesterday, I was taking my dinner in an humble restaurant clear down town. I was dressed in rough clothing, and my hands were soiled to look like the paws of a day-laborer. For some time back I have thought it advisable to keep under cover, as it were, and I have been passing as a 'longshoreman out of work; in reality waiting for an opportunity to slip aboard some outgoing ship and make my escape.

I sat in the restaurant and read my paper (it was a pretty devilish interesting paper, to me), and finished my dinner before considering what was now the best course to pursue. The few people about me were talking of Lord Dunmersey, the murderer and swindler, and it gave me a curious sort of

satisfaction to hear them pitch into him. They could not have been more bitter had they referred to the real Dunmersey.

I ultimately went out into the street and around into my back room in one of the cheap waterside hotels. There I lay down upon the bed, and smoked my pipe, and cogitated. Nothing helps a man's reflections like tobacco.

It struck me, without any serious mental effort, that the strings were drawn pretty tightly, just at the moment. True, I might yet escape, if I so desired, but that was by no means the uppermost thought in my mind. The one thing that ran through my brain, and tortured me beyond all words of description, was the thought that now Daisy must know me for a trickster, an adventurer, an assassin.

I had never before possessed faith in the pangs of real grief. But the reflection that this child, the first human being for whose esteem and respect I had ever felt the faintest desire, must henceforth regard memory of me only with loathing and chagrin, almost drove me mad.

I lay there for a long time ruminating in bitterness and regret, and all along the impulse grew stronger and more irresistible that I must find some means of communicating with Daisy. Whether I was to escape, or was to be led to the gallows, I must send Daisy some word. How could it be done? The question revolved with ever-growing rapidity in my mind. For hours I could not find an answer.

Abingdon Lake!

He promised me, when last we met, to help me in any way and at any time. Yes, I would take advantage of his offer. But how should I communicate with him?

By mail? No, that would entail a heavy risk.

By messenger? Impractical.

Better go straight to his house, in person. There would be plenty of danger, no matter how clever my disguise. But, after all, why disguise myself at all? If I do escape from the country I shall always be compelled to remain in hiding, wherever I may go upon the face of the earth. Moreover, the chances

are that some day I shall be caught, in any case. There are too many police in the world. The odds are too steep.

Under this train of thought I dropped peacefully off to sleep, at two or three in the morning, and I didn't wake up until noon. Then I arose, shaved, donned the genteel raiment of Lord Dunmersey, put on my gloves, stuck a revolver in my pocket, and, with a dainty stick in my hand, started out.

I struck into Broadway a little above the Post Office, and sauntered calmly up the street. I had made not the slightest attempt to hide my identity. On the contrary, every article of clothing on my person I had worn already, when I was masquerading before the gullible New York public. Anyone who had seen me then would not fail to know me now.

In front of a book-store window in Union Square I saw a crowd staring in. I approached and looked over their shoulders. Mounted on a large card was a copy of Milly's masterpiece—that Niagara photo-

graph. Printed on the card, in bold black letters, were the words :

TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS REWARD,

**For the Capture of
HENRY POINSETT,
alias**

**JAMES POINSETT,
LORD DUNMERSEY,
Charged with Murder.**

I walked on up Broadway, past half a hundred police officers, all of whom must have had my description in their pockets. And yet none of them took the slightest notice of me. They probably didn't expect to see me on Broadway. If I had skulked around back alleys, I should probably have been caught. As it was, I turned into Fifth Avenue and walked on beyond Forty-fifth Street, straight up the steps of Mr. Lake's mansion.

Mr. Lake himself was standing in the window, and he saw me approach. I don't think I ever observed a look of astonishment on his face before, but he certainly did seem surprised this time. He came to the door,

Let me in, and led the way in silence out to his study and library, in the rear of the drawing-rooms.

When we were inside, he locked the door, drew the curtains, and turned up the gas. Then he stood for a few seconds before the fire, with his hands behind him, staring silently at me.

"Have a drink?" said he, at last.

We went to the sideboard and quaffed a stiff brandy-and-soda.

Mr. Lake then resumed his place in front of the fire.

"Where did you come from?" he asked.

"Down near the City Hall," I replied, with nonchalance.

"Up Broadway?"

"Yes."

"Walked?"

"Yes."

"Well, I'm damned. And they say it's the finest police in the world."

"Mr. Lake," said I, changing the subject, "you were kind enough to say to me, a few days ago, that if you could serve me at any

time, you would do so—or words to that effect. I have come to call your bluff.”

“I will do anything I possibly can. You may rely on me.”

“In the first place,” I said, “I want the use of your library for two hours, or so. I have some highly important writing to do. In the second, I have a large sum of money on my person, which I desire to have delivered to the one to whom I address it. In the third, I want to ask you to give with your own hands to Miss Harwood, a note which I will write her. I shall never see her again. All I wish to do is to send her one short message. She must utterly despise me now.”

“Not much,” responded Lake, bluntly, as he produced a letter from his pocket. “I received this from her an hour ago.”

I took the note and read it. This is what it said:

“I have just heard the terrible news. I cannot believe he is all to blame. If you can think of any way to save or help him, do so for my sake. How he must suffer. If money is needed to enable him to escape, use

any or all of my fortune. Leave nothing undone. "DAISY."

I pressed the little paper silently to my lips. Pure, noble, unselfish Daisy !

"Now," said Mr. Lake, "after you have accomplished all you speak of, what do you propose to do ?"

"As I came up the street," I answered, "I observed that a large sum had been offered for my capture."

"Well ?"

"I thought I would go around to Police Headquarters and collect the reward," I said, quietly.

"What ? You don't intend to give yourself up ?"

"That is precisely my purpose. When you meet a conundrum you can't master, always give it up."

"Don't be a fool," exclaimed Lake. "Just remain here in my house for a few days. I will charter a schooner, put you aboard in the night, and away you go."

"I thank you sincerely and from the bottom of my heart," said I. "But I must face

the music. I am not going sneaking over the world for the balance of my career. I think I was justified in killing this man. But if I wasn't, I shall not evade my punishment."

Lake looked at me fixedly for a moment, and then shook my hand warmly.

"You are dead game," said he, "and perhaps you best know what course to pursue. Make yourself at home here. When you have finished what you have to do, ring the bell, and we will dine together. If, meanwhile, you change your mind about escaping, remember that I am with you, to the very end."

He walked to the door, and paused.

"Oh, by the way," said he, "here's a cablegram for you I found at the Hoffman. I pocketed it, so as to keep it away from the police. It may contain important information."

I thanked him, and he was gone.

As the door closed behind this great-hearted, honest man, it shut out the last human face I shall ever see.

Well, I can meet the end calmly enough. It doesn't amount to so very much, this exist-

ence of ours. The uncertainties, the cares, the disappointments, and the heartaches are greater than the joys and triumphs.

Is there anything more cruel, more malignant than the thought that we *must* live? Pshaw! Life is the one thing on earth that we can part with easily and without regret. Only when we pillow our heads on the soft bosom of Death can we find eternal peace.

It has often occurred to me, when looking upon the pictures of grinning skeletons and the other emblems of that term beyond our lives, that the artists were unduly harsh. Death should be pictured a beautiful woman, with velvet arms and dreamy eyes; and with breath so subtle and sweet that when she presses her lips upon ours we gladly yield ourselves up, and float away with her upon the pulseless sea of everlasting joy.

There are still some duties to perform. I toss the unopened cablegram aside, as I remember that I must send a line to Phosa. She, at least, knows me for what I am, and loves me just as much as though I were a better man.

"Dear Little Phosa," I write, "I send you with this note of farewell a considerable sum of money, which is my parting gift. If you have use for it at any time, do not hesitate to employ all or any part of it. If not, bestow it upon the one who is to live after us. Let this be a legacy to counteract in some measure the memory of a parent's career that was cruel, and criminal, and evil in all its influences. Phosa, I do not forget in this hour of taking my leave of the world that you have been true and steadfast to one who has deserved no part of your tender regard. I wish I might in some way requite all your loyalty to me. As I stand on the threshold of the unknown I can only reflect with gladness that a career which has brought nothing but sorrow and shame upon those who gave me their trust and affection, has reached its fitting close. Good-by, Phosa. May the future give you full store of the rewards which, through me, have been denied you."

For a long time after this I sat by the fire, with little Daisy's letter in my hand,

reading it again and again, and not knowing what to say in my final message to her. Once or twice I started to write, but tore the letters up with a wretched sense of my own weak inability to convey what was surging through my mind.

I take up the cablegram and start to tear it open. Pshaw! what is the use? What do I care for news from England now?

Time is going by. I must finish my work.

"DEAR MISS DAISY: The only bitterness there is to me in taking off the garments of a life that has borne none but Dead Sea fruit, is in saying farewell to you. A man who has lived a wholly reprehensible life like mine, has perhaps no right to speak of higher thoughts and nobler hopes to one so pure and innocent as you. But, as these are about the last words my hand will trace, you will perhaps believe some measure of what I say, when I tell you it was your gracious presence that awakened the first lofty and unselfish impulse in my heart. For a brief day I hoped that the doors of honor and happiness on earth had not been

closed to me forever. I thought I could see before me a higher, better, purer life, a sweeter, serener happiness than any I had ever before dreamed of. It was but a delusion. As we sow, so must we reap. My harvest-time is come.

"I write this note of tender farewell only that you may know how, with all my wretched past—and nothing they will say of me will be untrue—I was not hopelessly lost. I shall carry with me into the dark an absorbing gratitude for the touch that awakened in me sentiments I had not believed myself capable of possessing. Do not grieve for me. I shall be better beyond the world, and the world will be benefited through my departure. I love you, Daisy, with all the truth there is in me. If there is a throne of mercy, that will plead my cause.

"Good-by."

I think, my dear cousin, that I will now smoke one of Mr. Lake's large, solid perfectos, put my heels up to the fire, and ring down the curtain. I trust you will not misinter-

pret the spirit in which I am quitting life. I do so, not because I am afraid of the consequences of my acts, but because I have reached the just conclusion that living is not worth the trouble it entails.

I wonder if this cablegram is from you, sweet cousin? If it is, you will know that I hadn't enough interest in you and your affairs to open your final message to me.

This is an exceptionally good cigar.

You, in your misanthropic, stingy, mean career seem to have held on to existence with a good deal of satisfaction, and with a good deal more tenacity than anybody about you could possibly view with favor.

I wish you, however, a pleasant future. And if you can find it convenient to hunt up Lady Mildred Moore, alias Milly Bashford, on her arrival in England, and marry her, you will have succeeded in completing a couple which will attract the interested and unquenchable envy of all the hangmen on earth.

By the by, if you see Milly, I wish you would say to her that, although she is un-

doubtedly responsible for my unexpected demise, she need have no fear that I will haunt her. I will see that my spirit, if I have any, keeps as far from her earthly orbit as space will permit.

No, I most certainly will not bother my head over that cable message. Even telegrams no longer interest me.

What a splendid thing was done for the human race by the philanthropist who invented the bull-dog revolver. When a man wants to end everything, the muzzle of a big pistol against his heart is sure and swift.

This cigar grows rank as it draws to the end. I am sorry about that. I could have wished my last smoke would be a good one, all the way through.

However, it is not of much consequence. A weed more or less doesn't matter to the coroner.

Good afternoon, cousin,

Yours affectionately,

HENRY POINSETT,

LORD DUNMERSEY *pro tem.*

P. S. Here goes.

[Copy of cablegram left unopened by Henry Poinsett.]

LONDON, December 10th.

POINSETT, HOFFMAN HOUSE, NEW YORK.

Your cousin, Dunmersey, died last month,
yellow fever, Congo River. You succeed
to estate and title. We await instructions.

ABCHURCH & MIDDLETON,
Solicitors.

THE END.

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